

**Richard DiLello**, executive producer, creator, **DEA**, from Lorimar Television in association with Dark Ink Inc. Productions (Fox, Friday 9 p.m.). After serving as supervising producer for *Midnight Caller* its first year, Richard DiLello returns to prime time series TV with a show about the agents on the front line in the war against drugs. DiLello said he'll create a hybrid format for the show that will combine elements of documentary (including newsreel footage and interviews) with drama. "I didn't want to do a drug bust of the week kind of show," said DiLello. He said the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration will have no official role in the program, but has assisted the producers in preliminary research. He said former DEA agents will serve as consultants on the program. DiLello wrote and produced the made-for-TV movie *Popeye Doyle* and wrote the 1983 theatrical "Bad Boys."

**The Fanelli Boys**, produced by Disney for NBC, is the first television project from KTMB, the company formed by writer-producers **Barry Fanaro, Mort Nathan, Kathy Speer and Terry Grossman**. "We had been with Witt Thomas Harris for almost ten years," Fanaro said. "We did *Benson*, then 102 episodes of *The Golden Girls*, and decided it was time to do something new." The four left and came to Disney in partnership with their new company. After failing to cast a show they had created called *Anna*, "we got a call from Brandon Tartikoff, saying he had an idea we might like," said Fanaro. This idea was the basis for *The Fanelli Boys*, a comedy centering on an Italian family comprising a widow, her four sons, and the family funeral home. KTMB will serve as executive producers as well as writers on *Fanelli*, whose pilot was directed by sitcom veteran James Burrows, and the writing staff will also include Treva Silverman, "who did the first five years of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*," said Fanaro.

**Danny Bilson and Paul de Meo** are executive producers of Warner Bros.' **The Flash** (CBS Thursday, 8 p.m.), a one-hour science fiction series in Warner Bros.' continuing effort to develop co-owned DC Comics characters (a la "Batman"). Bilson and de Meo know science fiction. They spent the mid-1980's working for Los Angeles-based B-movie house, Empire Films,

producing films such as "Zone Trooper" and "The Eliminators." For the last four years they have been developing pilots for Warner Bros. Television, including *CyberForce* and *Human Target*, the latter a project still pending at ABC. With *The Flash*, Bilson, 34, and de Meo, 37, are producing their first prime time show. According to Bilson, they will take the show in the "revisionist" direction super heroes have been heading in recent years. "We hope to make it a fairly dark and sophisticated show," Bilson said. *The Flash* will have a two-hour pilot, currently in production, that is budgeted at \$5 million, making it one of the most expensive pilots ever. The question will be whether the series can sustain the level of high quality special effects of the pilot on a weekly budget of about \$1.5 million.

**Coleman Luck and Robert Lieberman** are executive producers on Lorimar Television's **Gabriel's Fire** (ABC, Thursday, 9 p.m.). When ABC secured a commitment from James Earl Jones to do a series, the network commissioned both a sitcom and drama script. The drama, written by Coleman Luck and Jacqueline Zambrano and directed by Richard Lieberman, won out. Jones stars as an ex-con who goes to work as an investigator for a high society lawyer. Luck and Lieberman are teaming to produce this series for Lorimar, where Luck has been developing projects for the past

year. Before that, Luck was with Universal Television, where he spent four years as senior writer and co-executive producer on *The Equalizer*. Lieberman, who will also serve as director of *Gabriel's Fire*, has directed a number of made-for-television movies, as well as episodes of *thirtysomething* and *Dream Street*.

**David Mirkin**, 33, is executive producer of **Get a Life**, New World Television (Fox, Sunday, 8:30 p.m.). After two years in "development land," Mirkin, 33, has emerged as executive producer of the "buddy" sitcom starring *Late Night With David Letterman* veteran Chris Elliott as a 32-year old "head paperboy," and his best friend, who has opted for a more traditional career. The show is in association with Mirkinvision and Elliotland Productions. Mirkin served as executive producer of *Newhart* in 1986-88. He then produced a pilot for MTM, featuring Elliott, called *Oh No, Not Them*. "It didn't work out for him on that show," Mirkin said of Elliott. "But we became great friends" Mirkin said the show will have something of a late night feel to it. "We'll never break the fourth wall," said Mirkin, as for example Garry Shandling did in talking to his audience. "But we will fool around in terms of form." Mirkin, 33, studied to be an electronics engineer, then switched to film school and went on the standup comedy circuit between submitting scripts to producers.

## PBS'S NATIONAL-LOCAL BALANCING ACT

*PBS President Christensen looks at programing the 90's*

**A** remade Public Broadcasting Service will lay out its plan for the next decade before member stations at the Loews Anatole Hotel in Dallas this week, June 17-21. For the first time, public TV general managers will meet jointly with programing, advertising and promotion and development managers. An estimated 1,400 attendees will debate recommendations from PBS's National Program Policy Committee on how PBS should use its newly centralized funding and power to develop, schedule and evaluate national programing. PBS President Bruce Christensen shared his thoughts on the meeting and those issues with BROADCASTING.

**In the recommendations draft sent to PBS member stations earlier this month, there appears to be an emphasis on gaining and keeping prime time audience and a call for a mix of ratings and qualitative measures of success. What do you say to critics who say public TV should divorce its policies and planning entirely from quantitative audience measure?**

It's simply unrealistic to believe you can spend the amount of money public television is spending and not be interested in knowing how many people are watching. While looking at an overall audience, we also want to know the makeup of that audience. Are children's shows