1960–61 SEASON

20. The Vast Wasteland

SEVEN YEARS AFTER MERGING WITH United Paramount Theaters, the ABC television network had reached apparent respectability. The network's commitment to the action-adventure format had paid off and, though it was still far behind CBS, ABC had successfully nosed out NBC for the number two slot in the 1959–60 season. Just as the new decade began, ABC was often placing as many programs in the top ten as the other networks, sometimes even more. Ollie Treyz, president of ABC-TV since 1958, noted this improvement with considerable pride. He went even further, though, and asserted that ABC was actually number one, citing a special Nielsen ratings survey that measured markets in which all three networks had full time affiliates to back his claim. Despite these pronouncements, ABC was not yet generally considered at parity with its rivals and was still unmistakably the "third network." Though the number and strength of its affiliates had increased, ABC was far weaker than CBS and NBC. Its news, public affairs, sports, and daytime programming were virtually nonexistent. Even its success in prime time had come almost entirely from one program type, action-adventure, with only occasional hits in other genres. If the action-adventure format faded before a viable followup was found, ABC could slip back into oblivion in a very short time.

While it searched for potential new prime time hits, ABC began to expand both its news and sports coverage in an attempt to increase prestige and build on its momentum. Its first important move in these areas was the surprise acquisition of exclusive television rights to the 1960 Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley, California. For the privilege of carrying the first Olympics held in the United States since the advent of television, the network paid $167,000. ABC viewed this investment in the Winter Games as essentially a losing venture that was valuable only as a bargaining tool in an attempt to acquire the more profitable Summer Games scheduled for Rome. When it failed to win the rights to the Roman Games, ABC canceled plans for coverage of the winter contests, feeling that they would cost too much and not attract sufficient viewer interest. CBS picked up both the winter and summer TV rights and found itself producing all eighteen hours of winter coverage on an unsponsored basis, just as ABC had expected. When the Winter Games brought in unexpectedly high ratings, both the networks and sponsors were appropriately stunned. Events such as a dramatic down-to-the-wire hockey win by the U.S. over the Soviet Union captured the public's attention and revealed a substantial audience for types of sports previously considered of only marginal interest. In August, CBS followed up the success at Squaw Valley with twenty hours of sponsored, well-produced coverage of the events in Rome, featuring sportscaster Jim McKay. The extensive use of video tape made it possible to present events in the United States on the same day they occurred in Italy, giving the games an immediacy and tension that had been noticeably absent in the long-delayed film reports of previous years. For CBS, the Winter and Summer Olympic Games were both an artistic and ratings success. For ABC, they were a valuable lesson.

Though it had lost this contest to CBS, ABC saw that sports events were a natural area for it to pursue. CBS and NBC had not come up with many dramatic sports innovations in the previous half decade and ABC could compete on an equal footing with them head-on, and attempt to outbid them for established events. Or, it could pick up contests they had dropped or had not considered at all. ABC had already become the sole network outlet for one of the first TV sports, boxing, by attrition. CBS abandoned *Blue Ribbon Bouts* in 1955 as a worn-out remnant of TV's early days, even though the show had maintained a relatively steady audience for seven years. ABC picked it up on the rebound and joined NBC and DuMont in carrying TV pugilistics through the 1950s. By the end of the decade, DuMont had folded and stories of corruption in the boxing profession and well-publicized deaths of boxers shortly after being pummeled in the ring had given the sport a sinister and subversive tinge that was reflected in lower ratings. In June 1960, NBC ended its association with boxing, dropping Gillette's *Cavalcade of Sports* matches after sixteen years. This left ABC alone in the field, and it continued to present weekly bouts until 1964.

As boxing declined during the late 1950s, other sports supplanted it as the chief focus of television athletics, and ABC scanned these for areas of possible expansion. Major league baseball was firmly in the grip of CBS and NBC, which both presented a weekend "game of the week." Beyond that, NBC had exclusive rights to the popular World Series contest. Television coverage of professional football, however, was especially attractive to ABC because it seemed to have elevated a game of rather limited appeal for thirty years into serious contention with baseball as the national pastime. Though NBC controlled college football telecasts and CBS presented the National Football League (which it had salvaged from DuMont), the sport seemed ripe for plunder. Interest in the game was growing and there was serious talk about the formation of a new professional football league.

Television helped to develop interest and appreciation for football by making the complicated game more comprehensible to the home audience. Video taped "instant replays" (which at first took nearly half an hour to air) provided viewers with the opportunity to see important plays repeated. This transformed the sport into a contest that was actually better seen on television than at the stadium. As the fans became more sophisticated, football became a frequent topic of discussion on television. Serious programs in the Sunday afternoon "egghead" slots began to examine the personalities and psychology of football in such well-produced entries as "The Violent World of Sam Huff" on CBS's *Twentieth Century* (hosted by Walter Cronkite). More important, plans for a new professional league to compete with the NFL for fan attention came through in late 1959. For the fall of 1960, ABC filched the Saturday afternoon NCAA college games from NBC and signed a TV pact for Sunday afternoon games with the brand new American Football League in a two-pronged drive for prominence in football. The NCAA games were a safe, established draw and the upstart AFL was a perfect mate to the upstart ABC. Although the AFL was clearly no match for the NFL in either talent or prestige, like ABC it had nowhere to go but up, and if either partner proved to be a success, the other would benefit.

ABC made its most daring move in the field of TV sports in April 1961 with the premiere of its Saturday afternoon *Wide World of Sports*. Hosted by former CBS sportscaster Jim McKay, *Wide World of Sports* was the brainchild of Roone Arledge, a sports producer ABC had picked up from NBC along with the NCAA football games. The show turned from the then accepted practice of slotting specific events one at a time in regular time periods to the revolutionary concept of presenting as many different sports as possible, often within the same program. Using both live and pretaped segments, the program resembled coverage of the Olympics as it brought together a diverse selection of contests from different venues. It exposed sports enthusiasts to events previously considered too limited in appeal for network television including track and field, auto racing, bowling, and tennis. The rapid pacing of the program as it shifted locales helped *Wide World of Sports* to lure viewers into accepting unfamiliar settings and events as part of an exciting afternoon of sports. The program was an unqualified success for ABC and over the years it established the network's reputation as an effective and innovative source for sports. In this area, ABC's expansion plans worked perfectly.

The network faced a more difficult challenge in upgrading its news and public affairs programming to compete with NBC and CBS because in this area it was unquestionably far behind in both experience and prestige. At the birth of network television in the late 1940s, ABC had started near the pace of its competition, offering *News and Views* in August 1948, just as the other networks were beginning nightly news shows. The Monday through Saturday show was structured exactly like a radio news and commentary program: one of the anchors would present the day's headlines and then offer a few minutes of interpretation. The anchor chores were rotated among a number of analysts such as George Hicks, Walter Kiernan, and the first female network news anchor, Pauline Frederick, but *News and Views* disappeared within one year. Although the format worked very well on radio, it was particularly ill-suited to television's voracious demand for visuals. For four years, ABC had no nightly news show and, for all practical purposes, no news department whatsoever. During this interregnum NBC and CBS significantly developed their television news resources and styles, while ABC settled for once-a-week commentary programs by individual radio analysts such as Paul Harvey and Walter Winchell.

As a sign of the growing strength and independence in the NBC and CBS news departments, neither allowed outside sources to produce news or news-related programs, keeping the nightly news shows and occasional news specials under direct network control. ABC, on the other hand, was forced to rely totally on outside sources for both film footage and program production, and it aired documentary series such as *Crusade in Europe*, *Crusade in the Pacific*, and *March of Time through the Years* from Time-Life in lieu of its own news and public affairs programming. Once the ABC-United Paramount Theaters merger of 1953 brought much-needed cash to the network coffers, ABC reactivated its news organization and resumed Monday through Friday newscasts in October 1953, with veteran newscaster-quiz master John Daly, formerly of CBS. Under Daly's leadership, ABC news improved substantially, even adopting the CBS-NBC dogma of "no outside documentaries." Unfortunately, due to the comparatively small budget for the ABC news department, this rule translated into no ABC documentaries at all. Most of ABC's affiliates refused to take the network's improved news posture seriously anyway and did not bother to carry Daly's fifteen-minute news show. In an attempt to remedy this situation, ABC moved the program into prime time (10:30–10:45 P.M.) during the 1958–59 season, but this shift placed it in a hopeless battle with the popular entertainment programs on the opposing networks. Even though ABC had upgraded its treatment of the news by 1960, it still had the weakest of the

September 11, 1960
Danger Man. (ATV). Patrick McGoohan portrays secret agent John Drake in this British series, which CBS brings to the States for a brief summer run beginning in April 1961.

September 26, 1960
The largest television audience yet—seventy-five million Americans—tunes in the first of four debates between presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. Howard K. Smith of CBS is moderator of the first (held in Chicago), which focuses on domestic affairs. Though the two are rated about even by radio listeners, television viewers give Nixon poor marks for personal appearance. He appears tired and haggard while Kennedy looks sharp and bright.

November 27, 1960
Issues and Answers. (ABC). The third network at last gets its own Sunday afternoon interview show. First guest: Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois.

December 16, 1960
Bill Shadel takes over ABC's nightly news show following the resignation of John Daly.

January 5, 1961
Mr. Ed. An off-beat syndicated series featuring Alan Young as Wilbur Post, a young architect who one day discovers that his horse, Mr. Ed, can talk. Allan "Rocky" Lane provides the voice for the good-natured palomino. The program is so successful that CBS puts it on network television in October, 1961, where it becomes a national hit.

January 7, 1961
The Avengers. Britain's ITV network presents the spy duo of Dr. David Keel (Ian Hendry) and a mysterious character referred to simply as Steed (Patrick Macnee).

FALL 1960 SCHEDULE

	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
M	local	The Cheyenne Show (Cheyenne; Bronco; Sugarfoot)		SURFSIDE SIX		Adventures In Paradise		Peter Gunn	ABC
O	local	To Tell The Truth	PETE AND GLADYS	BRINGING UP BUDDY	Danny Thomas Show	ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW	Hennesey	PRESIDENTIAL COUNTDOWN	CBS
N	local	Riverboat		Tales Of Wells Fargo	KLONDIKE	DANTE	BARBARA STANWYCK SHOW	Jackpot Bowling With Milton Berle	NBC
T	EXPEDITION	BUGS BUNNY SHOW	The Rifleman	Life And Legend Of Wyatt Earp	STAGECOACH WEST		Alcoa Presents: One Step Beyond	local	ABC
U	local		Father Knows Best	The Many Loves Of Dobie Gillis	TOM EWELL SHOW	Red Skelton Show	Garry Moore Show		CBS
E	local	Laramie		Alfred Hitchcock Presents	THRILLER		NBC Specials		NBC
W	local	HONG KONG		Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet	Hawaiian Eye		Naked City		ABC
E	local	THE AQUANAUTS		Wanted: Dead Or Alive	MY SISTER EILEEN	I've Got A Secret	U.S. Steel Hour Armstrong Circle Theater		CBS
D	local	Wagon Train		The Price Is Right	Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall		PETER LOVES MARY	local	NBC
T	local	GUESTWARD HO	Donna Reed Show	The Real McCoys	MY THREE SONS	The Untouchables		Take A Good Look	ABC
H	local	THE WITNESS		Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theater	ANGEL	Ann Sothern Show	Person To Person	DuPont Show With June Allyson	CBS
R	local	THE OUTLAWS		Bat Masterson	Bachelor Father	Tennessee Ernie Ford Show	The Groucho Show	local	NBC
F	local	Matty's Funday Funnies	HARRIGAN AND SON	THE FLINTSTONES	77 Sunset Strip		Robert Taylor In The Detectives	THE LAW AND MR. JONES	ABC
R	local	Rawhide		ROUTE 66		MR. GARLUND	The Twilight Zone	Eyewitness To History	CBS
I	local	DAN RAVEN		THE WESTERNER	Bell Telephone Hour NBC Specials		MICHAEL SHAYNE		NBC
S	local	THE ROARING TWENTIES		Leave It To Beaver	Lawrence Welk Show		Fight Of The Week	MAKE TH. SPARE	ABC
A	local	Perry Mason		CHECKMATE		Have Gun, Will Travel	Gunsmoke	local	CBS
T	local	Bonanza		THE TALL MAN	The Deputy	THE CAMPAIGN AND THE CANDIDATES		local	NBC
S	Walt Disney Presents (from 6:30)	Maverick		Lawman	The Rebel	THE ISLANDERS		WALTER WINCHELL SHOW	ABC
U	Lassie	Dennis The Menace	Ed Sullivan Show		General Electric Theater	Jack Benny Program	Candid Camera	What's My Line	CBS
N	Shirley Temple Show		NATIONAL VELVET	TAB HUNTER SHOW	Dinah Shore Chevy Show		Loretta Young Show	This Is Your Life	NBC

three network news organizations by far and found itself consistently losing in direct competition with CBS and NBC.

In the months following Charles Van Doren's revelations to Congress, the news departments at all three networks became very important to network prestige as the industry displayed a sudden deep concern for the value of news and public affairs, hoping that such programs could erase the black mark the quiz show scandal had given television. Some television executives saw such a public commitment as a perfect PR device to counter criticism of the industry and possibly even rekindle the notion of television as cultural savior. Because it lacked the resources and manpower, the ABC news department found itself hard pressed to instantly deliver some new documentary series similar to those announced by NBC and CBS, even on an irregular basis. However, ABC did successfully participate in a fortuitously timed event that allowed television to display its best side, the "great debates" staged in the fall of 1960 between the two major-party candidates for president. An act of Congress suspended the equal time law to allow the networks to broadcast four debates between Democrat John Kennedy and Republican Richard Nixon without being obligated to offer an equal amount of network time to each of the other legitimate, but minor, candidates for the presidency. For the first time in years, people again began talking about the fabulous nature of television and its ability to allow millions of people across the entire country to share an important and historic series of events. The debates provided a windfall of good publicity for the networks, sparked strong voter interest in the election, and probably provided the thin margin of victory for Kennedy, who came across more effectively than Nixon in the vital first debate. For this special event, ABC News held its own, producing two of the four contests.

In the field of in-house documentaries, though, ABC just could not compete with CBS and NBC. The network was anxious to display its own documentary series and it convinced Charles Percy's Bell and Howell company to finance *Bell and Howell Closeup*, a series of floating specials produced by ABC News and similar to *CBS Reports*. The first few productions of the new series (which premiered in September 1960) were roundly panned so ABC turned again to Time-Life, relinquishing control of the series to the Time-Life film crew headed by Robert Drew. John Daly viewed this production deal as a direct violation of his no outsiders policy and quit ABC at the end of 1960. Ironically, the new *Closeup* series was far removed from the industry-controlled public relations fluff Daly had feared and it presented some of the most imaginative television documentary work in years, satisfying ABC's desire for material that could match the work at NBC and CBS. Drew's first program in the series, "Yanki No!" took its cue from Ed Murrow's *See It Now* "Christmas in Korea" show, downplaying the role of the narrator and avoiding the artificial setting of formal interviews. It attempted to capture people and events "as they were" in a *cinema verite* style comparison between Cuba under Fidel Castro, who was on the verge of publicly announcing that he was a Communist, and South American countries run by right wing dictators. Drew's crew portrayed Latin Americans as generally restive and fearful under the military rulers supported by the United States government, and showed Castro's supporters happy and enthusiastic. Subsequent shows in the series tackled such diverse subject matter as the effect of automation on the U.S. labor force ("Awesome Servant") and the defiant attitude emerging among American blacks ("Walk in My Shoes"). In each of these, the *cinema verite* style seductively underplayed a far stronger editorial stance than most network documentaries of the time chose to assume. Though purporting to present things as they were, Drew's crew carefully selected the film clips they used in order to present a very specific viewpoint, without an easily identifiable narrator cast as an advocate of the position. This style was aimed at conveying a strong point about a controversial issue without confronting the viewers with dramatic accusations that might alienate them before the problem could be fully explored. Someone of the stature of Ed Murrow might be able to use the force of his personality and reputation to argue a specific point of view (as he had done in his broadcasts about Senator Joseph McCarthy) but such figures were the exception. Murrow, in fact, had sometimes found that the instances in which he had taken a strong stand made it that much harder to present other unrelated issues to people who had concluded he was biased and not to be trusted. Because heightened awareness of an issue was all that could ever be expected to result from even the best documentary, it was vital that the audience be willing to give the program a fair hearing. The *cinema verite* style in ABC's *Closeup* series allowed the audience such opportunities and gave the network the class documentaries it wanted, though the use of an outside crew merely postponed the necessary development and expansion of ABC's own news department for several more years.

The news department at NBC occasionally followed the *verite* style in its floating *NBC White Paper* series. The technique was used in such reports as "Sit In" (a personal study of the individuals involved in the sit-in tactics being used to integrate stores in Nashville), but the producers usually stuck to well-made but traditional in-depth overviews of controversial topics, being careful to avoid taking any stand, explicit or implied. The subject matter of these programs ranged from an analysis of the U-2 spy plane affair to an examination of both sides of a rebellion going on almost unnoticed in Portugal's African colony of Angola. Another NBC floating documentary series, *Project 20,* usually avoided such controversy entirely and focused instead on more cultural topics. One typical program, "The Real West," attempted to present a view of the old West more realistic and accurate than the fictional TV Westerns. Narrated by Gary Cooper, the program used old photographs and personal memoirs to portray the events leading to the closing of the frontier and the conquest of the nation's Indian tribes.

Of all the networks, CBS provided the most dramatic documentary of the season, "Harvest of Shame," one of the strongest pieces by Ed Murrow since the Army-McCarthy days. On November 25, 1960, in the middle of the Thanksgiving holidays, Murrow brought the living and working conditions of America's migrant farm laborers to the attention of the general public, which knew next to nothing about the topic. As a sort of updated *Grapes of Wrath,* the program depicted the squalid conditions of the migrant workers in sharp contrast to the wealth of their employers, the food growers. The growers' side of the issue was also presented, but Murrow took a firm stand and left no doubt in viewers' minds that he felt something had to be done, such as federal protection for the workers and industry-wide standards to guide the owners. The timing of the program combined with its firm and effective presentation of a strong point of view touched off a bitter national controversy over the issue of migrant farm labor. Growers complained that they were unfairly portrayed, while average citizens expressed their outrage at the situation and echoed Murrow's appeal for some corrective action. Though sixty minutes of film could never change a situation by itself, "Harvest of Shame" made a deep impression on the American public, and it emerged as one of the most incisive documentaries of Murrow's career. It was also his last major production at CBS because a few months later he accepted newly elected President John Kennedy's offer to become the director of the United States Information Agency. Murrow left behind a well-trained group of correspondents and colleagues at CBS who respected him and worked to maintain his journalistic principles. The door to his office retained his name plate for three years after he was gone. When CBS moved its offices into a new building, the "Murrow door" was taken off its hinges and moved as well.

Of course, even with the extra emphasis on public affairs by the networks during the 1960–61 season, such programming accounted for only a tiny fraction of prime time and was usually tucked away in some unprofitable time slot or presented as a floating, irregularly scheduled special. The networks' real concern rested, as usual, with the performance of their regular prime time shows and the possible emergence of any new program fad. For the most part, 1960–61 marked a discernible pause in the industry, with regular prime time programming continuing almost unchanged from the previous season. NBC and CBS presented their usual selection of Westerns and sitcoms while ABC continued to emphasize action-adventure. Both NBC and CBS also launched a few vehicles in the action-adventure format, but they regarded these as part of a still unproven fad and were ready to drop them at the end of the season if they did poorly.

As the viewing habits for the 1960–61 season developed, it became clear that the bread-and-butter staples were holding steady, but the action-adventure format was in serious trouble, especially for ABC. Though *77 Sunset Strip* and *The Untouchables* remained in the top ten, the new crop of third generation action-adventure clones proved to be the worst of all, registering generally poor ratings with only two shows surviving for the 1961–62 season. The new programs contained no original twist, only the same lifeless characters, tired plots, mindless murders, and so-called exotic settings. *The Aquanauts,* produced by Ivan Tors, presented the adventures of a team of free lance skindivers in Honolulu. *The Islanders* featured the adventures of a pair of handsome pilots and two beautiful women who operated a tiny airline service in the Spice Islands. *Hong Kong* cast Rod Taylor in warmed-over Charlie Chan-type adventures set in the mysterious Orient. One show managed to incorporate two clichéd settings in one season. Premiering in the fall as *Klondike,* it featured Ralph Taeger and James Coburn in a premise that was *The Alaskans* sideways, mixing cut-throat adventures and pure-as-the-snow innocence in the Northland's beautiful but dangerous palace of ice. By mid-season, the producers wrote off *Klondike* and put Taeger and Coburn in the new, but somehow familiar, *Acapulco.* This mixture of cut-throat adventures and pure-as-the-sand innocence in Mexico's beautiful but dangerous seaside paradise did not last three months.

As failure in the action-adventure format became more frequent, Warner Bros. began transplanting actors from the unsuccessful series to some of its remaining slots. *Cheyenne* became a rotating series, taking the *Sugarfoot* and *Bronco* shows under its banner. Roger Moore moved from the Alaskan frontier of the 1890s to the old West of the 1880s in the improbable role of Beau Maverick, the long-lost British cousin of Bret and Bart. James Garner

January 27, 1961
Sing Along with Mitch. (NBC). Goateed maestro Mitch Miller invites everyone to "sing along—loud and strong."

March 2, 1961
Newton Minow is sworn in as chairman of the FCC.

April 16, 1961
Death of *Omnibus.* Age: 9 years. In its final season, the show was relegated to a Sunday afternoon slot once a month on NBC.

April 17, 1961
ABC Final Report. (ABC). The first network attempt at late night news each weeknight (11:00–11:15 P.M.). At first, the program is carried only by ABC's O&O stations, but in October it expands to the entire network.

June 9, 1961
Worthington Miner's syndicated *Play of the Week* is canceled.

June 12, 1961
PM East/PM West. Westinghouse gets into late night television, syndicating ninety minutes of talk and variety five days a week. One-half of the program comes from New York (with Mike Wallace) the other half from San Francisco (with Terry O'Flaherty). In February 1962, the West portion is dumped.

July 17, 1961
John Chancellor takes over NBC's *Today* from Dave Garroway.

(brother Bret) had departed the series in a contract dispute and was seen only in *Maverick* reruns. Another refugee from *The Alaskans,* Dorothy Provine, brought her nightclub singer character to the studio's weak imitation of *The Untouchables, The Roaring Twenties.* Rex Reason and Donald May joined her as a pair of investigative reporters in search of hot scoops on the latest activities of bootleggers and mobsters. The series relied on a few artifacts of the period (raccoon coats, cars, the Charleston), acceptable 1920s-style music, and a sprinkling of "timely" phrases (such as "hotcha" and "Twenty-three skidoo") to cover the predictable plots. *The Roaring Twenties* was a mere shadow of the sharply produced *Untouchables,* and it faded after two seasons. One other new Warner Bros. action-adventure series, *Surfside Six,* also managed to hang on for two seasons while serving as yet another haven for members of the studio's action-adventure acting company. Van Williams moved in from *Bourbon Street Beat* while his partner, Troy Donahue, eventually moved on to *Hawaiian Eye.* Apparently the studio had run out of exotic foreign spots so it set the usual flip talk and detective pretty boys aboard a houseboat in Miami Beach (address: Surfside Six).

It was too much. After three years of variations on the "two parts private eye, one part cutie pie" formula, the public had had enough. As the 1960–61 season progressed, the Warner Bros./ABC action-adventure structure began sliding into the ocean. The other networks quickly shifted their energies back to other formats, but ABC had nowhere else to go. It had stumbled upon this formula almost by accident and the network was on the verge of returning to its pre-action-adventure number three status. Though ABC might still produce an occasional, isolated hit, it could no longer automatically count on this formula as a continuing source of new programs. As the network began drawing up plans for the next season (a process which, at the time, was usually completed by March), it frantically searched for any formula that might provide a steady stream of shows, hoping that blind chance might strike again. ABC even tried expanding the dubious concept of bringing so-called "adult cartoons" to prime time, a format that had had a disappointing debut in 1960 with *The Flintstones.*

Through the summer and early fall of 1960, ABC's advance publicity touted *The Flintstones* as the "first adult cartoon show" and promised that it would be a satire on suburban life that would appeal to grownups as well as children. Rarely had a show been so erroneously hyped. When the program hit the airwaves in late September, it was immediately apparent that *The Flintstones* was actually just another kiddie cartoon series from the TV animation mill of Bill Hanna and Joseph Barbera, a team responsible for such characters as Tom and Jerry and Yogi Bear. Nonetheless, ABC's placement of the show at 8:30 P.M. (past the traditional kiddie hour), its choice of sponsor (Winston cigarettes), and its continuing ballyhoo indicated that the network was seriously aiming *The Flintstones* at adults. Unfortunately, while the program's faults might have been quietly passed over in a Saturday morning children's slot, they could not withstand the direct comparisons with other prime time fare.

Ironically, at the same time ABC was plugging *The Flintstones* as a cartoon series capable of entertaining all age groups, it was almost ignoring another prime time cartoon show on its schedule that really could, *The Bugs Bunny Show.* The series had been developed after Ollie Treyz discovered that an independent station in Chicago (WGN) had been running old Bugs Bunny cartoons in prime time (6:30 P.M. in the Midwest) with considerable success. Hoping to duplicate that success on the network, ABC bought the last of the Warner Bros. theatrical cartoons not yet released to television and presented them in a format that featured brand new introductions and transitions by Bugs and other popular Warner characters such as Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Foghorn Leghorn, and Porky Pig. Because these cartoons were originally intended for release with Warner Bros. movies, the cartoonists had specifically aimed at entertaining the adults as well as the children with playful lampoons of Hollywood stars, popular movies, and then-current events. The animation, scripts, and characters reflected more than thirty years of sophisticated development by some of the best animators in Hollywood and they hopelessly outclassed anything produced specifically for television.

Hanna-Barbera could not possibly match the high standards of the best Warner Bros. cartoons, but in attempting to develop its own cartoon series for adults, the company did begin with a sensible strategy. It took the successful characters from a live-action adult sitcom (in this case, *The Honeymooners*) and created animated caricatures. To increase the potential for gags and satire, the cartoon characters were placed in a fully developed suburban community that happened to be set in the Stone Age. Veteran character actors Mel Blanc and Bea Benaderet were cast to do some of the voices. The series held great promise that was never realized. All the appealing elements of *The Honeymooners'* characters were lost in the transition to animation, and *The Flintstones* emerged as a dimwitted interpolation in a Stone Age setting. Fred Flintstone was noisy, boastful, and stupid. His neighbor, Barney Rubble, was a dolt. The interaction and scheming of the two lacked the wit, energy, humor, and deep affection of the Jackie Gleason-Art Carney original. Fred's wife, Wilma, possessed none of the intelligence, personality, and understanding of Alice Kramden. All of the cartoon characters came off merely as … cartoon characters.

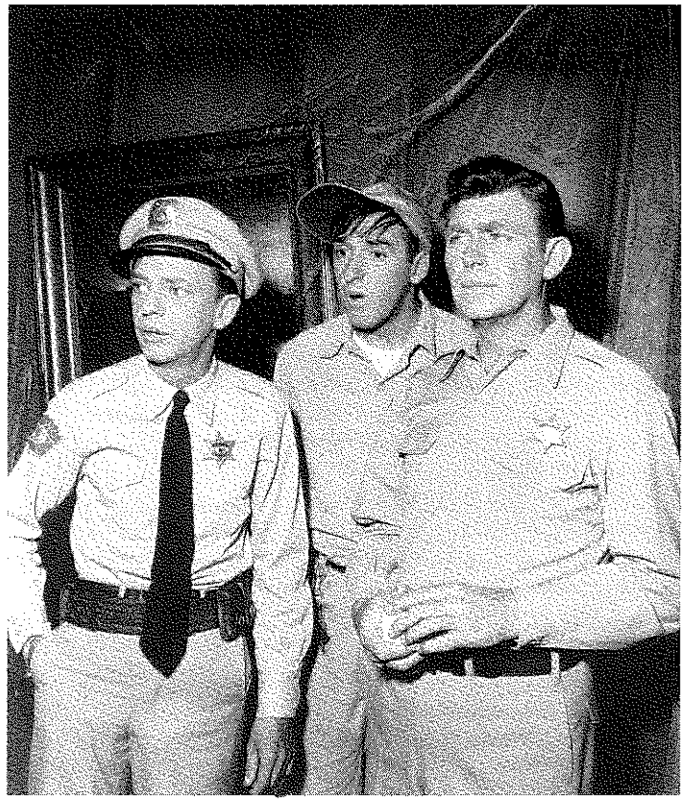
Perhaps the weak characters might have been tolerable if the promised satire on American life had come through. It did not. All Hanna-Barbera did was effect a one-to-one transplant of modern mechanical devices to Stone Age animal equivalents. Fred and Barney operated enormous dinosaurs instead of mechanical bulldozers. Fred drove a car powered by his own two feet. Pterodactyls with seats strapped to their backs served as airplanes. That was it. No witty satire. Just formula animation. Nonetheless, the series lasted six seasons on ABC, though the characters of Fred, Wilma, Pebbles (their daughter), Barney, Betty Rubble, and Bamm Bamm (their son) reached their most effective penetration of the market when the show ended its prime time run and moved to its natural home, the Saturday morning kiddie circuit, and then into syndication, spawning several spinoff series along the way.

For ABC's immediate future, *The Flintstones* provided a quick program fad for the network to exploit, and by the 1962–63 season, it had launched three additional "adult" cartoon series that followed *The Flintstones* style: *Top Cat* (a *Sergeant Bilko* imitation), *Calvin and the Colonel* (*Amos 'n Andy* of the animal world), and *The Jetsons* (*The Flintstones* backwards). Of course, the cartoon format was much too limited in appeal to serve as a substitute for the fading action-adventure series, but it underscored the return to ABC's patchwork style of filling its prime time schedule with virtually anything, in the hope that a flash hit would take hold.

For a change, ABC was not alone in feeling the absence of high quality new shows. All three networks had reached the bottom of a programming slump in 1960–61. Only two new series made it into the top ten, ABC's leisurely *My Three Sons* and CBS's rural-oriented *Andy Griffith Show. My Three Sons* was just a routine family comedy featuring Fred MacMurray, while CBS's show effectively reunited the "No Time for Sergeants" movie team of Andy Griffith and Don Knotts. Their roles were essentially continuations of their film characters, grown a bit older and relocated in the small town of Mayberry, North Carolina. Andy played an understanding and mature good ol' boy who served as the town's sheriff, and Knotts was the hysterically bug-eyed paranoiac deputy, Barney Fife, who constantly tried, and failed, to fit his own image of the traditional tough cop. Barney never understood that big city high pressure tactics were unnecessary in Mayberry because it was virtually crime free. The program's tempo reflected the slow-as-molasses life of a small rural town and a good deal of time was devoted to warm family segments featuring Andy as a gentle widower trying to raise his young son, Opie (Ronny Howard), with the help of his aunt, Bee Taylor (Frances Bavier). These vignettes followed *The Rifleman* pattern of a father-son relationship as Opie learned homey lessons about life either on his own or from his dad. The comedic foundation of the show, though, rested with the contrast between this very normal family life and a handful of Mayberry's citizens who could be set off on some crackpot notion in a matter of moments. Aside from occasional outbreaks of hysteria caused by Barney, the show's stories often involved some of the town's other colorful characters such as Otis, the town drunk; Floyd, the barber; and the two personifications of country naiveté, Gomer and Goober Pyle. Through it all, Andy was never ruffled and did not bother to carry a gun. He knew that nothing had ever happened in that town and that nothing ever would. The calm hominess of the program, combined with the balance between sanity and insanity, proved very popular with viewers and they followed the story of Mayberry for eleven years.

There were also a few outstanding dramatic shows that season, including an expanded hour version of *Naked City* (with a new leading man, Paul Burke), the surprisingly serious private eye drama of *Checkmate* (with Sebastian Cabot as a portly professional criminologist who was the guiding genius behind prettyboy detectives Anthony George and Doug McClure), and the offbeat character studies of *Route 66.* George Maharis and Martin Milner played a pair of wandering anti-heroes who set out on U.S. highway 66 "in search of America" and some direction for their lives. Milner played a clean-cut college boy who had lost his family fortune with the death of his father and Maharis portrayed a reformed juvenile delinquent from the ghetto. The two had pooled their funds, purchased a Corvette (the show was sponsored by Chevrolet), and become drifters who cruised the country, inevitably drawn along the way into the lives of people who were facing some crisis. The wide open format allowed the series' chief writer, Stirling Silliphant, the opportunity to introduce a varied assortment of offbeat personalities and place them into modern morality plays. These people were good at heart, if slightly warped, and it was up to Maharis and Milner (acting as unofficial social workers and psychoanalysts) to help them face the consequences of their actions and reassert their goodness. Filmed on location, *Route 66* was a good show due to its strong cast, good writing, and flexible format. The only aspect that made no sense was how episodes taking place in Butte, Montana, or in rural Mississippi could be part of a series named after a road that ran from Chicago to Los Angeles.

These series provided a few moments of high quality entertainment in an otherwise depressingly mediocre season. Effluvia such as *Peter Loves Mary, National Velvet, The Tab Hunter Show, Pete and Gladys,* and *Guestward Ho!* filled the airwaves. Westerns reached a new level of sadism with the gory vengeance killings and intrafamily homicides of *Whispering Smith,* and the sadistic white slavers and threats of brutal mutilation in *The Westerner* (produced and directed by Sam Peckinpah). Even two former



The pride of Mayberry: *(from left)* Deputy Barney Fife (Don Knotts), gas station attendant Gomer Pyle (Jim Nabors), and sheriff Andy Taylor (Andy Griffith). *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*

television greats, Jackie Gleason and Milton Berle, turned up in roles that were embarrassing and demeaning to their tremendous talents.

Gleason returned to television as the host of an insipid quiz show, *You're in the Picture.* Contestants behind a large picture canvas stuck their faces through cutouts in the scene and tried to identify the situation in the picture, using clues provided by Gleason. This format lasted one week. Gleason scrapped it and took over the show himself, announcing on the second program that the premiere had, "laid, without a doubt, the biggest bomb in history." He devoted the entire program that week and the next to a thirty-minute comedy monologue based on the frantic meetings by the show's producers as they desperately tried to salvage something from the venture. They finally wrote it off as a total loss and Gleason used the two remaining months of the program's run to feature whatever friends he could talk into helping him out. Even though Gleason's show was an obvious loser, it remained on the air for two more months because, at that time, the networks did not bother with wholesale mid-season schedule changes and replacements. They felt that a show doing poorly in January could not possibly improve dramatically before the season ended, so to try to promote and improve it would be a waste of time and money. It was much wiser to write off the bad shows, let them finish their run, and concentrate instead on assembling the new fall schedule by the end of February.

Milton Berle's reappearance was not a great public flop like Jackie Gleason's, but it was no less degrading. Mr. Television, the man whose talents had enticed many Americans into purchasing their first sets, was relegated to providing patter for *Jackpot Bowling.* Each week, sportscaster Chick Hearn did the play-by-play and Berle appeared at the beginning, middle, and end of the show to tell a few jokes and hand out a few thousand dollars in prize money. The comedown of Gleason and Berle was staggering but representative. The previously respected geniuses of television's early years were being reduced to cheapened pawns whose name value was callously exploited. Where would it all end? Would Sid Caesar turn up as a carnival clown on a kiddie show? Would Fred Coe begin producing laxative commercials? Would Pat Weaver wind up running a UHF station in Arkansas? Would Tony Miner start working for Soupy Sales? No esthetic genius appeared invulnerable. Television seemed hell-bent on eradicating any reputation for quality it had developed. Though the networks pointed with justifiable pride to their highly praised documentaries and news shows, programs such as *Jackpot Bowling, Surfside Six,* and *The Flintstones* more accurately reflected the true state of the industry.

Television's critics had all but given up complaining that the networks had gone too far in sacrificing program quality to viewer quantity, realizing that their protests would be brushed aside with the latest statistics indicating that viewing totals were up again. After all, the network chiefs responded, the public cast its vote of support every day by tuning in whatever they churned out. Among themselves, though, even broadcasters admitted that the 1960–61 season was less-than-exceptional, and there were plans to tinker with a few programs and perhaps introduce a few new programming wrinkles; but there was no hurry. Improvements might take place eventually, but in laying out the schedules for the 1961–62 season the emphasis remained on gaining a competitive edge, not upgrading quality. A few mundane programs were accepted as a necessary part of broadcasting along with the desperate rating battles and unstable program formats. It was all business as usual. Each of the networks totaled their profits and losses for the season and prepared for the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters.

Every year broadcast executives met to discuss the state of the industry, pat themselves on the back, and listen to a bland speech by an important government figure (usually from the FCC) who did little to dispel the convention euphoria or the notion that everyone there was doing a great job "serving the public interest." Newly appointed FCC chairman Newton Minow was scheduled to deliver the address on May 9, 1961, before that year's NAB gathering in Washington. Coming only two months after he took office, Minow's speech would be his first chance to express his ideas about broadcasting directly to its important executives and leaders. Though the thirty-five-year-old former law partner of Adlai Stevenson was an unknown quantity, it was assumed that he would probably follow the usual pattern of praise tempered with vague exhortations that the industry do even better in the future. All of the bigwigs of network TV were in the audience: Robert Sarnoff and Robert Kinter of NBC, Leonard Goldenson and Ollie Treyz of ABC, and Frank Stanton and James Aubrey of CBS. They were not prepared for what Minow chose to say:

> I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station [or network] goes on the air and stay there without a book, magazine, newspaper, profit-and-loss sheet, or ratings book to distract you-and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland. You will see a procession of game shows, violence, audience participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, Western badmen, Western goodmen, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons, and, endlessly, commercials, many screaming, cajoling, and offending, and, most of all, boredom. True, you will see a few things you enjoy, but they will be very, very few, and if you think I exaggerate, try it.

At this point, the trade journal *Variety* later reported, Sarnoff's brow (always perpetually wrinkled) showed a few more furrows. Treyz's face had turned white, while Stanton's was red. The faces of Kinter and Aubrey were frozen in masks, and Goldenson's had iced into a Mona Lisa smile. Minow went on:

> Is there one person in this room who claims that broadcasting can't do better? Is there one network president in this room who claims he can't do better? Why is so much of television so bad? … We need imagination in programming, not sterility; creativity, not imitation; experimentation, not conformity; excellence, not mediocrity.

The members of the NAB were stunned. No one had ever talked to them that way before. What's more, Minow, as head of the FCC, might actually do something to implement his suggestions and seriously affect the industry. Consequently, no one dared to openly rebuke him as he delivered his speech, though the convention was filled with behind-the-scenes grumbling.

Newspapers picked up Minow's "vast wasteland" phrase and critics used it as a quick condemnation of the entire industry. Though broadcasters grudgingly came to the general consensus that in some respects Minow was right and the 1960–61 season had been exceptionally weak, they were in a bind. Despite the expectation that something should be done immediately to improve television programming after the adverse publicity directed toward it, the 1961–62 schedules had been locked up and sold since March and could not be changed in May. The best the networks could do was slot a few more public affairs shows, paint rosy pictures for 1962–63, and prepare to endure the barrage of criticism they felt certain would greet the new season.

1961–62 SEASON

21. I Still Have the Stench in My Nose

NETWORK CZARS WERE BRACED FOR DISASTER following FCC chairman Newton Minow's roasting of the industry in his "vast wasteland" speech. Lavish reforms were promised by network potentates for the 1962–63 season, but as the 1961–62 season progressed the need for such dramatic action faded. Though some truly terrible television aired in the new season, Minow's speech, almost by accident, marked the rock bottom end of a decline rather than the identification of a permanent, insoluble situation. Ever since the rise of the big money quiz shows in 1955 and 1956, the quality of TV had been eroding steadily as the industry put aside many high quality drama, comedy, and news shows which drew only adequate ratings in favor of programs that offered the promise of flashy, but unstable, instant success. In searching for possible new hit formats for the 1961–62 season, network executives had developed, by chance or instinct, several concepts that revived some of television's best work, updated for the 1960s. Major breakthroughs took place in legal, medical, movie, and sitcom formats with programs that set the pattern television shows of both high and low quality would follow for the remainder of the decade. There were only a handful of these new shows that fall, but they provided enough good new television to take some of the immediate sting from the vast wasteland description and to convince people that, after one of the most uninspired seasons in TV history, something was being done to improve programming.

The legal drama of *The Defenders* came directly from the so-called golden age of television. Back in February 1957, *Studio One* had presented a two-part story of a father-and-son legal team that had to overcome both intrafamily disagreements and judicial obstacles. Written by Reginald Rose and produced by Herb Brodkin, "The Defenders" offered a situation far more complex than the average TV crime show. As lawyer *pere,* Ralph Bellamy found himself torn between his distaste for the defendant, a repulsive young hoodlum played by Steve McQueen, and his responsibilities to the legal profession. His bright but idealistic son, played by William Shatner, insisted that their client receive the best defense possible, even though he was probably guilty. The story received high critical acclaim and, four years later, with *Perry Mason* a successful series, Brodkin and Rose teamed up again to produce a new lawyer series based on the play. They brought their high dramatic standards to *The Defenders* and treated it like the drama anthology shows of old, with one important difference.

Drama anthologies such as *Studio One* had demanded that viewers accept a whole new world every week, without offering any identifiable continuing characters to provide a much-needed personal link. Even if the shows were first rate and dealt with themes and issues that hit home, many viewers felt it just was not worth the constant effort required to follow the maze of new faces and settings. Instead they turned increasingly to continuing series with familiar central characters or, at best, anthology series with stable, well-known hosts such as Alfred Hitchcock and Rod Serling. In the waning days of the drama anthology genre, producers used big name Hollywood guest stars in an attempt to overcome the continuity gap, but the tactic was not very successful because the format problem still remained: in the intimate world of television, the public preferred familiar characters and settings.

In *The Defenders,* Brodkin and Rose tied together their high quality writing, production, and selection of guest stars with a strong pair of central characters: E. G. Marshall as trial lawyer Lawrence Preston and Robert Reed as his son, Kenneth. Within the very accessible framework of courtroom drama, they presented tight character studies as well as the public debate of controversial topics television normally never dealt with. Nonetheless, it still looked for all the world like just another good lawyer show and CBS slotted it on Saturday night following *Perry Mason.* The placement was perfect because the two programs complemented each other. *Perry Mason* was a well-directed murder melodrama while *The Defenders* focused on characters and issues. The treatment of touchy subjects was never obvious and overbearing because Brodkin and Rose carefully incorporated it into each week's case. The trial process became a full-scale debate presenting both pro and con arguments through Marshall, Reed, and the supporting characters and guest stars as they planned the best ways to handle the legal strategy. Through all the topical discussions, however, the program still maintained the basics of good drama with strong characters and entertaining scripts.

The Defenders was the first TV series to examine the effects and implications of entertainment blacklisting. Jack Klugman portrayed a John Henry Faulk-type character who found his broadcasting career ended after his sponsor was frightened by a small pressure group. Another episode, "Voices of Death," scrutinized the flaws in the judicial system itself and raised the possibility that an innocent person could be sentenced to death. The first episode

FALL 1961 SCHEDULE

Day	Network	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
MON	ABC	Expedition	The Cheyenne Show (Cheyenne; Bronco)		The Rifleman	Surfside Six		BEN CASEY	
	CBS	local	To Tell The Truth	Pete And Gladys	WINDOW ON MAIN STREET	Danny Thomas Show	Andy Griffith Show	Hennesey	I've Got A Secret
	NBC	local		National Velvet	The Price Is Right	87th PRECINCT		Thriller	
TUE	ABC	local	Bugs Bunny Show	Bachelor Father	CALVIN AND THE COLONEL	THE NEW BREED		ALCOA PREMIERE	Bell And Howell Close Up
	CBS	local	Marshal Dillon	DICK VAN DYKE SHOW	The Many Loves Of Dobie Gillis	Red Skelton Show	ICHABOD AND ME	Garry Moore Show	
	NBC	local	Laramie		Alfred Hitchcock Presents	DICK POWELL SHOW		CAIN'S HUNDRED	
WED	ABC	local	STEVE ALLEN SHOW		TOP CAT	Hawaiian Eye		Naked City	
	CBS	local	THE ALVIN SHOW	Father Knows Best	Checkmate		MRS. G. GOES TO COLLEGE	U.S. Steel Hour Armstrong Circle Theater	
	NBC	local	Wagon Train		JOEY BISHOP SHOW	Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall		BOB NEWHART SHOW	DAVID BRINKLEY'S JOURNAL
THR	ABC	local	Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet	Donna Reed Show	The Real McCoys	My Three Sons	MARGIE	The Untouchables	
	CBS	local	FRONTIER CIRCUS		NEW BOB CUMMINGS SHOW	THE INVESTIGATORS		CBS Reports	
	NBC	local	The Outlaws		DR. KILDARE		HAZEL	Sing Along With Mitch	
FRI	ABC	local	STRAIGHTAWAY	THE HATHAWAYS	The Flintstones	77 Sunset Strip		TARGET: THE CORRUPTORS	
	CBS	local	Rawhide		Route 66		FATHER OF THE BRIDE	The Twilight Zone	Eyewitness
	NBC	local	INTERNATIONAL SHOWTIME		Robert Taylor's Detectives		Bell Telephone Hour Dinah Shore Show		FRANK McGEE'S HERE AND NOW
SAT	ABC	Matty's Funday Funnies	The Roaring Twenties		Leave It To Beaver	Lawrence Welk Show		Fight Of The Week	Make That Spare
	CBS	local	Perry Mason		THE DEFENDERS		Have Gun, Will Travel	Gunsmoke	
	NBC	local	Tales Of Wells Fargo		The Tall Man	NBC SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES			
SUN	ABC	Maverick (from 6:30)	FOLLOW THE SUN		Lawman	BUS STOP		Adventures In Paradise	
	CBS	Lassie	Dennis The Menace	Ed Sullivan Show		General Electric Theater	Jack Benny Program	Candid Camera	What's My Line
	NBC	The Bullwinkle Show	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		CAR 54, WHERE ARE YOU?	Bonanza		DuPont Show Of The Week	

of the series thrashed out the issue of mercy killing while another installment, "The Benefactor," dealt openly with abortion, then illegal and barely acknowledged. This episode, in which a doctor spoke out in favor of the practice, caused a public controversy in which eleven of the 180 stations that normally carried the program, as well as the regular sponsor, pulled out for that week. Despite such a daring (yet generally evenhanded) approach to important issues, *The Defenders* was an immediate ratings winner for CBS. Throughout its four-year run it maintained high standards of production quality while attracting a large and faithful audience that did not seem to mind "serious drama" on a weekly basis.

NBC and ABC turned to a different profession, medicine, in their pursuit of ratings success. Aside from *Medic* (Worthington Miner's 1954 series for NBC starring Richard Boone), doctors had been largely ignored by television until those two networks realized that the medical profession offered the opportunity to present romantic, good-looking heroes in situations that were literally matters of life and death. For its medical drama, NBC reached back two decades with *Dr. Kildare,* based on an old MGM film series that starred Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore. For the TV update, Raymond Massey portrayed the Barrymore character of crusty but compassionate Dr. Leonard Gillespie, the senior medical guru at Blair General Hospital, and Richard Chamberlain played the young idealistic intern, James Kildare. The two central characters established a relationship similar to the father-and-son lawyer team of *The Defenders,* in which they consistently disagreed on operating policy for each week's patients. Gillespie, the experienced veteran, preached patience and understanding while the impetuous Kildare put principle before tradition, often making the innocent mistakes of youthful inexperience. Unlike *The Defenders*, though, the stories emerging from their conflicts were not in-depth discussions of complex issues but rather high class soap opera. While a very good soap opera, *Dr. Kildare* was still just a sugar-coated view of life with inordinately good-looking people experiencing one heightened dramatic crisis after another. There always seemed to be some beautiful woman with a fatal disease who fell in love with Kildare, or a visiting specialist who threatened to have Kildare suspended over some minor procedural infraction. Chamberlain, while a fine dramatic actor, projected an almost too good choir-boy image in these situations. He never seemed to have an impure thought or a desire to do anything in life other than cure disease. The steady stream of guest stars, as the patients and visiting doctors, suffered from the same inherent limitations of the soap opera plots. All the characters and situations were neatly wrapped up in a structure that was ridiculously constant: each episode featured three patients suffering different maladies, while an in-house controversy raged among the doctors.

ABC's medical drama, *Ben Casey,* was structured almost identically to *Dr. Kildare.* It had the same soap opera-ish conflicts and diseases, a parade of guest stars as the tormented patients, and the interaction between the handsome young neurosurgeon, Ben Casey (Vincent Edwards), and his crusty but compassionate mentor, Dr. Zorba (Sam Jaffe). The chief difference between the two programs was that Casey was a more rugged character than Kildare. Casey's image was that of a man torn by his conscience as he faced important decisions at the hospital. In contrast to Kildare's choir-boy goodness, Casey was once described as "the grim doctor who must be cruel to be kind." Despite the minor differences, both *Dr. Kildare* and *Ben Casey* were exactly the same in one important area: both programs seemed designed to appeal specifically to women. The love and death medical themes that had kept housewives entranced for decades on the daytime soap operas were moved, intact, to the nighttime medical soapers. The characters of Kildare and Casey were enticing and charismatic, with Chamberlain appealing primarily to older mothers and young girls, while Edwards attracted more worldly women in their twenties and thirties. Both programs offered competent drama and conflict in addition to the suds and sex, thus extending the appeal to the entire family. Both programs also turned into the smash hits of the season, which was welcome news to both NBC and ABC.

A portion of President John Kennedy's press conference on July 23, 1962, was carried on the first live TV program transmitted to Europe using AT&T's *Telstar I* satellite. *(Property of AT&T. Reprinted with permission of AT&T.)*

The two networks had faced the 1961–62 season in a depressed state and were moved to innovation out of a desire to dramatically change their situations. ABC was fading rapidly following the collapse of its action-adventure format, and NBC was trying hard to rise from the unfamiliar number three slot. Besides developing the successful new medical dramas, the two competitors also revived the idea of prime time feature films and this, too, provided both with welcome ratings boosts.

Films had been regularly aired in network prime time before 1961, but no network had ever presented relatively recent domestic feature films in the slots. When network television began, the major Hollywood studios had been very reluctant to release their old films to television because they feared this would destroy the market for rerelease and would offer, free on television, competition to their new material then at the theaters. Consequently, the *CBS Film Theater of the Air* in the 1940s had run ancient two-reelers more to fill empty hours than to attract an audience. In the 1950s, ABC's *Famous Film Festival* was forced to belie its title by featuring moldy unknown British product rather than well-known American films. The network's *Hollywood Film Theater* managed to secure American material from RKO, but the films were largely stale and forgettable. By 1957, the major American studios had changed their policies and released most of the pre-1948 films to the home viewing market. By then, the networks feared that these high quality films would make their weekly series look bad, so they did not pick up the available films; instead, these became the private cache of late afternoon and late night local programmers.

In 1961, NBC decided to take a shot at scheduling movies in

September 17, 1961

DuPont Show of the Week. (NBC). After four years as a series of floating dramatic specials for CBS, the DuPont program switches to NBC, changing formats as well. The weekly series now includes drama, documentary, and variety presentations ranging from "The Wonderful World of Christmas" (with Carol Burnett and Harpo Marx) to "Hemingway" (narrated by Chet Huntley).

September 24, 1961

Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color. (NBC). Robert Kinter, who signed Disney to television when he was with ABC, brings the popular family program with him to NBC. For the first time, the show airs in color (which ABC shied away from), beginning with the premiere episode, "Mathmagic Land," featuring Donald Duck and a new animated character, Professor Ludwig Von Drake.

September 30, 1961

Gunsmoke expands to sixty minutes, while the cream of six years of the half-hour shows are rerun on Tuesday nights under the title *Marshal Dillon.*

October 2, 1961

Calendar. (CBS). Harry Reasoner hosts a thirty-minute morning show combining hard news and soft features. Reasoner's wry essays, co-written with Andrew Rooney, are a high point of the program.

October 3, 1961

Calvin and the Colonel. (ABC). One year after the death of *Amos 'n Andy* on radio, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll again bring their characters to television, but in the less controversial animated animal adventures of Col. Montgomery J. Klaxon (a fox, voiced by Gosden) and Calvin Burnside (a bear, voiced by Correll).

December 11, 1961
The Mike Douglas Show. The former band singer starts a ninety-minute afternoon talk show on Westinghouse's KYW in Cleveland and is nationally syndicated by October 1963.

February 20, 1962
After ten postponements, John Glenn becomes the first American in orbit and part of television's first big space spectacular. Jules Bergman (ABC) and Roy Neal (NBC) do well, but the earthbound star is CBS's Walter Cronkite.

March 17, 1962
Benny "Kid" Paret dies at the hands of Emile Griffith in a Madison Square Garden boxing match carried on ABC's *Fight of the Week.* Using special replay equipment, the network repeatedly reruns the mortal blow in slow motion.

March 26, 1962
ABC Evening Report. (ABC). Revamping its nightly news, ABC brings in Ron Cochran as anchor.

April 16, 1962
Walter Cronkite replaces Douglas Edwards as anchor for *The CBS Evening News.*

June 14, 1962
Steptoe and Son. (BBC). Following a successful one-shot comedy special in January, the junkyard duo of crusty old Alfred Steptoe and his restive son, Harold, are brought back for a regular sitcom series.

June 25, 1962 x
The Steve Allen Show. Westinghouse replaces Mike Wallace's *P.M.* with a traditional talk show by a net vet.

July 10, 1962
"World television" becomes more than a PR tout with the launch of the *Telstar I* satellite. For the first time, live television transmission across the Atlantic Ocean is possible.

prime time as part of its effort to raise itself from the doldrums of last place. The network paid Twentieth Century Fox $25 million for fifty post-1950 films to be aired in prime time on Saturday night, though the network protected itself against the possibility of a major flop with a clause in the contract that gave it the right to cancel the agreement after sixteen weeks if the film series proved unsuccessful. Unlike every previous prime time film effort, *NBC Saturday Night at the Movies* quickly established itself as a ratings contender, though it did not come to dominate Saturday night for several more years. The series succeeded where previous efforts had failed for two reasons: The films were relatively new and the package contained a fair portion of outright box office hits. What's more, nearly half of the films were in color, and with color set sales continuing a slow but steady advance, such an attraction was beginning to have some meaning.

ABC noted NBC's success, quickly purchased fifteen post-1948 films from United Artists, and in April 1962, premiered its own prime time movie slot, *Hollywood Special* (soon renamed *The ABC Sunday Night Movie*). After years of bitter rivalry between network television and the Hollywood studios, the two now looked to each other as important partners in the entertainment industry. The battle was over and their marriage was nearly complete.

As the power at the top, CBS did not have to chase every program fad and unproven concept, but could develop shows at a more leisurely pace in its traditional strengths such as drama and situation comedy. The network had been the home of high quality situation comedies since the early 1950s with programs such as *I Love Lucy, The Honeymooners,* and *The Phil Silvers Show,* but as the decade progressed it had turned from this format to emphasize other forms such as Westerns, quiz shows, and sixty-minute adventure series. Consequently, CBS had not actively searched for successors to the great sitcoms of the decade and had been content with keeping the top ten vehicles of its established stars such as Jack Benny and Danny Thomas. When the other formats faded, the network turned again to comedy for new material. With the obvious success of such programs as *Dennis the Menace,* network president James Aubrey reemphasized this network strength and, in the fall line-ups for 1960 and 1961, one-half of CBS's new programs were situation comedies. Aubrey also encouraged the development of ideas and pilots for additional sitcoms, feeling that the potential for tremendous success rested in this format.

In the summer of 1960, CBS aired *Comedy Spot* which, like many summer filler series, served as a dumping ground for pilot films that had failed to win network support. Occasionally one of the rejected pilots struck a nerve and was picked up for production after all, but most faded away, with the summer broadcast serving as a sad postscript to an aborted idea. The few that were picked up on the rebound sometimes faced special difficulties in production because very often by that time the cast and crew had already committed themselves to other ventures and were no longer interested in the proposed series. One pilot from the summer of 1960 that managed to overcome its initial rejection and find a place in the 1961–62 schedule was a pet project of Sid Caesar's old cohort, Carl Reiner, called *Head of the Family,* which depicted the home and office life of Rob Petrie, the head writer for a television comedy show. It was, in effect, Reiner's own professional story.

In the pilot episode aired on *Comedy Spot,* Petrie (played by Reiner) and his wife Laura (Barbara Britton) had to convince their son Ritchie (Gary Morgan) that his father's job was as interesting and important as those of the other kids' fathers. To prove his point, Rob brought Ritchie to the office to see firsthand how valuable he was to the other two writers, Sally Rogers (Sylvia Miles) and Buddy Sorrell (Morty Gunty), and the show's host, Alan Sturdy (Jack Wakefield). The format seemed workable, the cast adequate, and the writing clever, but it just did not click. Reiner refused to give up on the idea after the initial rejection (drafting additional scripts beyond the pilot), and reworked the series, keeping the format intact but assembling a new cast. He remained an occasional performer as the Alan Sturdy character (renamed Alan Brady), but concentrated on writing and production, relinquishing the lead role of Rob Petrie to Dick Van Dyke (who had bounced about CBS for five years as a host of cartoon and morning programming). Mary Tyler Moore (the leggy, sexy-voiced phone operator "Sam" on *Richard Diamond)* assumed the part of Laura, and Larry Matthews played Ritchie. In a stroke of genius, veteran comics Morey Amsterdam and Rose Marie, who had labored for years in the wilderness after some success in the early days of broadcasting, were cast as the new Buddy and Sally. Amsterdam had been a frequent performer in network television's early days and Rose Marie had begun singing on the NBC radio network when she was three years old (as Baby Rose Marie), and both brought an essential sharp comic edge to their characters. CBS was convinced and scheduled the new series, renamed *The Dick Van Dyke Show,* to begin in October 1961. The new cast lifted the program's highly workable format far above its original promise. Although the series took a few seasons to truly catch on, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* became a worthy successor to *Lucy* and *Bilko,* building its own large and loyal audience. The program also had an all star team behind the scenes including executive producer Sheldon Leonard and directors John Rich and Jerry Paris. Reiner penned half the scripts for the first two seasons himself, but also added writers such as Bill Persky, Sam Denoff, Garry Marshall, and Jerry Belson who understood the series dynamic perfectly.

The Dick Van Dyke Show set its action in both the Petrie home in suburban New Rochelle (Reiner's home in real life) and Rob's office in Manhattan. The home scenes were solid and grounded, with support for the domestic situations provided by next door neighbors, Millie and Jerry Helper (played by Ann Morgan Guilbert and director Jerry Paris), but the office scenes were bits of inspired brilliance that gave the show its drive. Reminiscent of another Sheldon Leonard program, *The Danny Thomas Show,* Reiner and his fellow writers set Dick Van Dyke in a world they knew well. Van Dyke, the star of a TV sitcom, portrayed a writer for a TV comedy series, in a part written for him by writers of a TV sitcom. By working with a setting they faced every day (writing for a TV comedy show), they infused the office scenes with sharp, animated humor as Rob, Buddy, and Sally tossed quips back and forth in a rapid-fire style reminiscent of an old vaudeville stage show. The writers also directed some effective barbs against television itself in scenes that involved the show's vain star, Alan Brady (Reiner), and the flunky producer, Brady's brother-in-law, Mel Cooley (Richard Deacon). Whether the comedy was set at work or at home, the situations were always humorous and exaggerated, but still basically identifiable and real. The stories were not a grand satire on the times, but the presentation of comic crises and complications that someone who worked as a New York television writer might face.

Series such as *I Love Lucy* and *Leave It to Beaver* had symbolized life in the 1950s, and *The Dick Van Dyke Show* did much the same for the first half of the 1960s, perfectly capturing the feeling and sense of the Kennedy years. (With her bouffant hairdo, Mary Tyler Moore even looked a little like first lady Jackie Kennedy in those days.) The series presented a range of characters living in a world not very different from the one that many viewers faced. Rob and Laura lived in a real middle class town in which real people commuted to and from real jobs. He was a decent, intelligent, hard-working father and she was a helpful and clever wife who was neither wacky, gorgeous, nor conniving. They were true partners in marriage. The program effectively replaced the interchangeable blandness of the 1950s with a generally believable view of successful middle class life of the early 1960s.

The Dick Van Dyke Show, The Defenders, Dr. Kildare, Ben Casey, and prime time movies were important signs that television was improving and had begun to break out of its mediocre state of the 1960–61 season. Nonetheless, they were only a handful among the new shows that premiered in the fall. Most of the new entries were weak vehicles for talented performers, mindless fluff, or just very bad television. For the most part, the 1961–62 season still carried the unmistakable marks of a vast wasteland.

Several new sitcoms merely maintained the mold of late 1950s blandness: *Window on Main Street* reactivated Robert Young in his favorite role as thoughtful patriarch; *Room for One More,* starring Andrew Duggan, continued television's fascination with families enlarged by adoption or remarriage; *Hazel* (based on the long-running *Saturday Evening Post* cartoon) cast Shirley Booth as maid to possibly the dumbest family in TV history; and *Mrs. G. Goes to College* provided an awkwardly improbable swan song for Gertrude Berg as a newly enrolled student.

Two promising young comics, Bob Newhart and Joey Bishop, made misdirected, undistinguished debuts as comedy headliners. Newhart, whose comedy album *The Button Down Mind* had been a 1960 sleeper hit, was miscast as a genial host of a half-hour variety show. Bishop, who had made a name for himself with his ad-lib witticism on TV panel and talk shows, found himself playing a public relations man in a ploddingly scripted sitcom that wasted his quick wit.

Nat Hiken, the creator of Sergeant Bilko, tried unsuccessfully to duplicate the formula of that series with *Car 54, Where Are You?* Two excellent character actors, Joe E. Ross and Fred Gwynne,

The Dick Van Dyke Show home setting: *(from left)* Dick Van Dyke as Rob Petrie, Larry Matthews as son Ritchie, and Mary Tyler Moore as Laura Petrie. *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*

were cast as the bumbling policemen who cruised the Big Apple in squad car 54, but it was *Bilko* without Bilko. Ross, as Gunther Toody, faithfully duplicated his bumbling oo-oo-ooing *Bilko* character of Mess Sergeant Rupert Ritzik, but it was not enough. Though he and Gwynne, as the drab, earlobe-pulling Francis Muldoon, provided hilarious caricatures of the Jack Webb lookalikes that appeared to populate nearly every cop show, the two worked best as supporting actors. They could not match the mad energy of Phil Silvers, whose domineering personality had held the *Bilko* show together, and *Car 54, Where Are You?* seemed constantly in search of a main character. Hiken had slipped up on the basics of a good sitcom and as a result the program provided merely adequate diversion, rarely matching the energy of its catchy opening theme song.

One new sitcom, though, managed to top all these minor artistic flaws with a premise that seemed designed to epitomize the term "vast wasteland": The *Hathaways,* one of the worst series ever to air on network TV. The show marked the last step in television's vilification of American parenthood, presenting Jack Weston and Peggy Cass as surrogate parents to three chimpanzees, Enoch, Charley, and Candy. Weston and Cass treated the three chimps as human children, dressing them in children's clothes and encouraging them to imitate human actions such as dancing, eating, and playing. The scripts, acting, and production were horrible, and the premise itself was utterly degrading to both the audience and the actors. (Weston often wore an expression that made him look like a befuddled monkey.) *The Hathaways* more than justified the network executives' early apprehension about the new season and, though it lasted only one year, it stood as an embarrassing example of the depths programmers had reached in their desperate search for a chance hit in any format or premise.

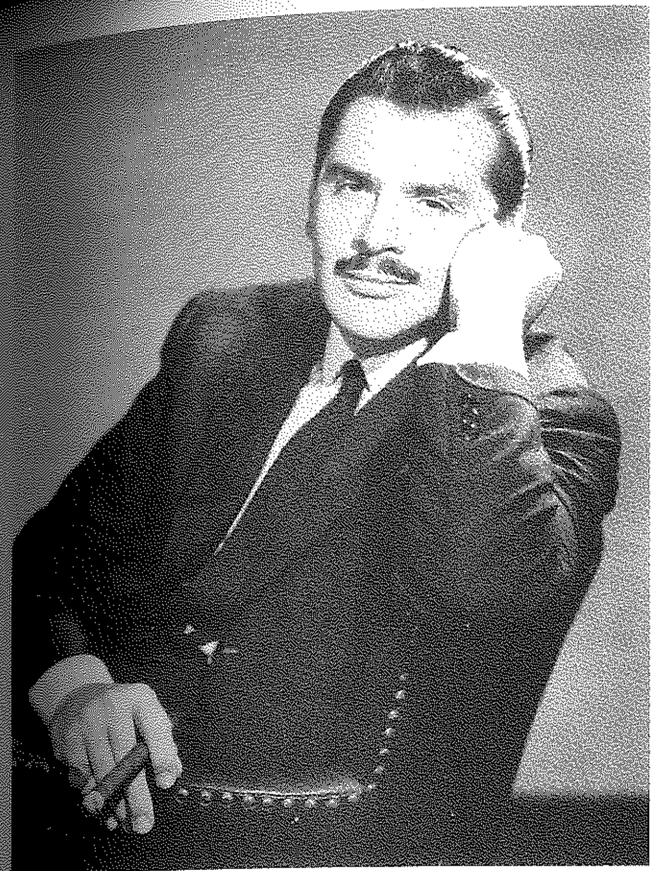
At the office in *The Dick Van Dyke Show: (from left)* Dick Van Dyke, Morey Amsterdam as Buddy Sorrell, and Rose Marie as Sally Rogers. *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*

Despite the total worthlessness of sitcoms such as *The Hathaways,* the programs that attracted the heaviest criticism in the 1961–62 season were the so-called "realistic" crime shows. These programs presented violence that was at best merely gratuitous but at its worst sordid, morbid, and gruesome. Among the merely gratuitous shows were *Cain's Hundred* and *Target: The Corruptors,* two inferior permutations of *The Untouchables* set in the present. In *Cain's Hundred,* Mark Richman portrayed Nicholas Cain, a former mob lawyer who came over to the side of the law and helped track down his former employers, the nation's one hundred top mobsters. Though the series bore some surface resemblance to *The Untouchables* (Richman's Cain personality was very similar to Robert Stack's Eliot Ness; and Paul Monash, executive producer of *Cain,* had worked on the pilot for "The Untouchables"), it lacked high quality supporting characters and any feel for realism. The series focused on little else but gunplay. *Target: The Corruptors* set its violent gunplay under the respectable guise of uncovering modern crime by featuring the adventures of an intrepid newspaper reporter who worked with federal agents to weed out and expose corruption. No matter what area of modern life they investigated, though, violence was inevitable. The series began with a dramatization of crime in the field of garbage collecting and within the first twenty seconds of the premiere episode, a garbage man was shot.

87th Precinct went beyond violence into morbidity and sexual overtones. It was a bad version of *Naked City,* focusing on the daily grind of New York City law enforcement. Detective Steve Carella (Robert Lansing) led a squad of plainclothes cops who were all morose, shoddy, and dense. The plots emphasized cheap thrills and titillating violence. One episode featured the pursuit of a sadistic murderer who first tattooed, then poisoned, his female victims. After a particularly gruesome chase, he was somehow detained by Carella's beautiful deaf-mute wife and then captured. Such individuals and plots cast an appropriately somber pall over the entire series.

Of all the exercises in violence, ABC's drama anthology *Bus Stop* provided the most graphic, brutal, and controversial episode, and the one that touched off a wave of outraged reaction among network affiliates as well as in the halls of Congress. Loosely based on the 1956 movie of the same name, *Bus Stop* set a small central cast in a tiny Colorado town where they awaited the weekly guest stars who inevitably began each story with their arrival at the town's bus depot. At first, the Twentieth Century Fox series dealt in light Hollywood fluff such as an errant father returning to defend the honor of his wrongly accused son. To spice up later episodes, the show turned to more sensationalist tabloid material, culminating in "A Lion Walks Among Us" (directed by Robert Altman). *Bus Stop* used pop singer Fabian as its guest star draw. Though really a very clean-cut young man, Fabian was cast as a degenerate drifter capable only of deceit, betrayal, and murder. To win acquittal of one charge of murder in the town, he had an affair with the D.A.'s alcoholic wife and then used that to blackmail the D.A. Once released, he killed his own lawyers. In a perverse "balance of justice," the D.A.'s wife then killed him.

This sordid episode was labeled "rancid" by one critic and twenty-five stations refused to air it. They claimed it was obscene and that it glorified violence and perversion while deliberately using a teen favorite to entice young viewers. Senator John Pastore of Rhode Island, who was rapidly becoming a vocal new watchdog of television, agreed. He happened to be holding hearings on the very topic of TV violence when the episode aired and he could not get it out of his mind. He brought it up in congressional debate again and again for months as the perfect example of the terrible excesses he was fighting. "I looked at it," he said, "and I haven't felt clean since. I still have the stench in my nose."



Both on-screen and as a producer, Ernie Kovacs was a groundbreaking, innovative force in television comedy. *(Courtesy Edie Adams Trust)*

In spite of the *Bus Stop* brouhaha, network television weathered its first season following Newton Minow's vast wasteland speech rather well. Westerns no longer saturated each evening's line-up. Action-adventure gave way to medical soap opera. Serious drama returned in the guise of a continuing series. Situation comedy experienced a rebirth. And public affairs programming increased substantially. Overall, television had steered itself away from the mediocre excesses of the immediate past and pulled itself out of the rut it had fallen into after the quiz shows. In the process, TV managed to restore some of the luster to its tarnished respectability. What's more, the public's perception of television quality had risen as well. Consequently, executives planning the 1962–63 season felt no compulsion to implement the full scale changes they had vaguely pledged immediately following Minow's speech. Instead, they slipped back into business as usual and worked at developing imitations and spinoffs of the respectable and successful new doctor, sitcom, and movie formats. At the same time as the networks began seriously considering exactly what to copy for the new fall schedules, television lost one of its true originals, Ernie Kovacs, who died on January 12, 1962, in a car crash.

Kovacs had been the first true *television* comedian. Even back in the *Three to Get Ready* days on a local Philadelphia station, he seemed to understand the visual possibilities inherent in television better than any other performer on the air. Though other comics such as Milton Berle and Sid Caesar were visual performers (that is, their acts had to be seen to be appreciated), they were only doing vaudeville in front of a camera. Kovacs understood the potential for humor in the tricks and effects that were possible only on television. Since his brief stint as a part-time host of the *Tonight* show in the 1956–57 season, Kovacs had been offered few opportunities to perform on network television. He made a few movies in Hollywood while being wasted as host of several low-level ABC series such as *Take a Good Look* (a panel quiz show that used his characters and skits as game clues) and *Silents Please* (in which he supplied funny voice-over comments to cut-downs of old silent films).

In early 1961, Kovacs talked his sponsor, Dutch Masters, into allowing him to produce, write, and act in a series of monthly specials in the company's regular Thursday night *Silents Please* slot. The cigar makers enjoyed having the cigar-chomping Kovacs as host to that show and agreed to support the experiment. On an absurdly small budget for the project he envisioned ($15,000 per show), Kovacs launched his series. From the very first special in April, he totally departed from the then-established form of TV comedy (monologues followed by skits) and presented instead short unconnected bits of humor (blackouts) with an emphasis on visual, often abstract, tricks of TV technology. One thirty-minute program consisted of the visual interpretation of sound, with no narration whatsoever. For instance, instead of showing an orchestra playing "The 1812 Overture," Kovacs used snapping celery stalks and slamming desk drawers as visual accompaniment to the music. He also directed digs at his regular show, *Silents Please,* by taking the logical next step in his manipulation of the old films. Instead of providing just voice-over comments, he used a special effect to physically step into the picture as a frustrated director calling out humorous and absurd orders to the performers.

The program also featured Kovacs's cast of his own continuing characters he had developed over the years, who were quite funny even without the aid of his technological tricks. The most familiar was Percy Dovetonsils, an effeminate, permanently soused poet who read nonsense verse with ludicrous titles such as "Ode to an Emotional Knight Who Once Wore the Suit of Medieval Armor Now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art While Engaged to One of Botticelli's Models." Others included Miklos Molnar, a Hungarian chef also "under the influence," who presented cooking tips; Auntie Gruesome, a dolled-up host to a creature features-type TV show, who ended up scaring himself with his long and gruesome descriptions of the horror stories; and Wolfgang Sauerbraten, a German radio DJ who introduced the latest hits in gibberish German-English clearly aimed at lampooning American broadcasters. Even such sacred objects as the closing credits fell to Kovacs's wit: Once they appeared as writing in a sink and were washed down the drain after each name.

Kovacs turned out eight such specials on ABC before he died and, though hampered by a meager budget, he nevertheless tried to do something different with television. Many viewers were frankly befuddled by what they saw because it departed so dramatically from their expectations for television comedy-variety. Yet that did not matter. What was vitally important was that in an industry content with blandness and imitation, Kovacs dared to challenge the limits of TV technology and steer it into previously unexplored territories. He pioneered a style that would completely alter television comedy, but that would not occur until years later, when his approach and technique were used to form the basis of *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* and *Monty Python's Flying Circus.* Long after his ABC specials were aired and forgotten, the world at last understood just what he had been trying to accomplish, and applauded.

1962–63 SEASON

22. CBS + RFD = $$$

DESPITE ALL THE PROMISES of programming reform made by television executives in May 1961, the 1962–63 schedule turned out to be business as usual. The improvements during the 1961–62 season had blunted Newton Minow's vast wasteland charge and diffused criticism by the government and the public. Profits and ratings once again became the chief concerns of network programmers and they began to cast a critical eye at the overabundance of news and public affairs shows which had proliferated chiefly as a public relations device to shore up television's respectability. By the 1962–63 season, six prime time programs, two on each network, provided a total of four hours of this type of material weekly: *Howard K. Smith News and Comment* and *Bell and Howell Closeup* on ABC; *CBS Reports* and *Eyewitness* on CBS; and *David Brinkley's Journal* and *Chet Huntley Reporting* on NBC. Nonetheless, several hard-hitting news reports reached prime time in the process, giving the network news departments the opportunity to flex their muscles.

CBS, with a sideways glance at the *cinema verite* style of ABC's *Closeup* documentary series, had hired Jay McMullen in 1961 as its own roving *verite* reporter. Even though at the time the networks had serious reservations about investigative news reporting for television (preferring traditional public affairs documentaries and discussions instead), McMullen was assigned to dig for unusual and controversial material. His first (and best) piece for CBS, "Biography of a Bookie Joint," managed to overcome most network objections to the form and demonstrated the effective impact of investigative TV journalism. McMullen found a key shop in Boston's Back Bay area that was visited by nearly 1,000 people each day, including many policemen. Further investigation revealed that the key shop was actually a bookie joint. He set up an observation post in a room across the street from the shop and, over a period of months, watched and filmed the comings and goings of the key shop's customers and even managed to shoot (admittedly jerky) footage of the shop's interior using an 8mm camera hidden in a false lunch box. Federal agents were informed of the illegal operations by McMullen and they, in turn, apparently tipped off the crew with the time of their impending raid on the shop, giving McMullen the opportunity to film it. "Biography of a Bookie Joint" emerged as an engrossing, real life crime thriller, complete with a dramatic sweep by the Feds as a climax, and it was widely acclaimed by viewers across the country.

In the city of Boston itself, the report caused immediate and long lasting convulsions. The local affiliate did not air it for one and one-half years, while legal wrangling took place. The city's police commissioner was forced to resign, and the Massachusetts legislature censured one member for the disparaging remarks he made on the program about his colleagues. In the ensuing trial, the police, tarnished by the evidence on film of their participation in the illegal gambling joint, tried to disprove the facts and dates contained in the story. Others contended that the show revealed blatant news mismanagement and biased reporting. The accuracy and objectivity of McMullen's story was proved correct at every step, though the charge of bias would be leveled with increasing frequency as investigative TV journalism developed through the decade.

In 1962, NBC presented its own real life dramatic news adventure, "The Tunnel," a ninety-minute war story set in Berlin. Most foreign-oriented documentaries of the time were generic formula pieces that inevitably settled for fluff travelogue visits like "This Is Monaco" and innocuous insights like "Mouamba: Land in Conflict," but "The Tunnel" presented the desperate scheme of some brave heroes in conflict with clear-cut bad guys. The program followed the daring escape of fifty-nine East Berliners through a 450-foot tunnel dug by twenty-one West Berliners. The constant fear of exposure and capture hung over everyone until the exciting climax of the story when the joyful East Berliners successfully made their way under the Berlin wall to freedom. So potent was this story that, due to the international tensions resulting from the Cuban missile crisis in October, "The Tunnel" (originally scheduled to air in October) was delayed two months. When it played in December, it earned critical acclaim, registered surprisingly strong ratings, and proved to be far more dramatic than the artificial action shows that usually filled prime time.

Besides offering a crime expose and war drama, the networks also displayed more daring in traditional documentaries and news reports. *CBS Reports* tackled such previously taboo subjects as birth control and teenage smoking as well as new concerns such as ecology. In "The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson" (broadcast in April 1963), CBS presented an evenhanded examination of the heavy use of pesticides and their possible disruption of the balance of nature, which Carson described in a book she had written. Because the issue was not familiar to most Americans, exposure in a network documentary tremendously aided Carson's side, much as the great debates in 1960 had helped relative unknown John Kennedy achieve an equal footing with Richard Nixon in the eyes of the public. Simply by acknowledging and interviewing advocates of a cause, television could inadvertently aid one side or another and make it almost impossible to ignore an issue or personality. One of the season's major TV controversies, in fact, developed when ABC's Howard K. Smith examined the personality and then-fading career of former Vice President Richard Nixon.

Smith had quit CBS, his long-time home, at the end of 1961 after a phrase comparing Southern bigots to Nazi storm troopers had been blipped from one of his occasional commentaries on the network's nightly TV news (oddly, the comment was left in the radio version). CBS said that Smith had crossed the line between analysis and editorial opinion, so Smith said *adios,* signed with ABC in the beginning of 1962, and immediately received his own program, *Howard K. Smith-News and Comment.* Unlike *David Brinkley's Journal, Chet Huntley Reporting,* and *Eyewitness* (with Walter Cronkite and Charles Kuralt), which all mixed feature reports and in-depth news reviews, Smith attempted to revive the spirit of the radio news commentators of the 1930s and 1940s. Other respected commentators including Quincy Howe and Drew Pearson had tried to bring that style of news analysis from network radio to television in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but the format always seemed too static for television. Smith set his program in a homey living room and embellished the commentary with charts, maps, occasional film clips, and interviews. Despite all the window dressing, it remained essentially just "talking heads" with little visual impact for television. Nonetheless, the program created quite a fuss in November 1962 with "The Political Obituary of Richard Nixon."

Only two years after his unsuccessful bid for the presidency, Nixon had lost a bitter campaign for the governorship of California, and it appeared that he was, in fact, through with politics (or vice versa). Following his latest defeat he proclaimed to the reporters gathered in California that they would not "have Nixon to kick around any more because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference." Smith took Nixon at his word and devoted his program on November 11 to a review of the man's political career, presenting observations from both supporters and detractors. Among those critical of Nixon was Alger Hiss, a former state department official who had been labeled a "Red subversive" in the late 1940s by then Representative Nixon and who eventually served time for perjury. In a one-minute film interview, Hiss said that Nixon's main motivation for doggedly pursuing him had been pure personal and political ambition. Hiss's charges were immediately followed by four minutes of filmed praise for Nixon by Representative Gerald Ford. Despite the careful balance of opinions, the very appearance of Hiss ignited a firestorm of protest. One of the show's sponsors, Kemper Insurance, pulled out. Conservative politicians and some publications, particularly the *Chicago Tribune,* kept the story alive for months, constantly issuing shocked statements asking how a TV network such as ABC could allow a convicted liar on the air. "Mr. Hiss is news," Smith replied, "and we're in the news business. I'm not running a Sunday school program." Other sponsors stuck by the program and ABC sued Kemper for violating its contract (the network eventually won its case). In spite of ABC's vigorous defense, though, it did not appreciate the trouble Smith had stirred up and the veteran newsman was by-passed for major assignments for the next year, and his *News and Comment* disappeared in the summer.

Smith's program joined most of the other public affairs shows that were dropped or lost their regular prime time slot as the networks modified their commitments to news throughout 1963. Executives pointed out that there had been too many shows appearing at once and the reduced frequency would loosen budgets and allow higher quality presentations. Though these programs were generally well done, there were too many of them and their sheer number diluted the audience and stretched resources far too thin to allow quality productions each week. Besides, the special public affairs programs had already served their chief function very well by contributing to the overall prestige of television and apparently proving to the FCC that the medium was no longer a vast wasteland. No new government regulations had been imposed and none appeared on the horizon. There was therefore no overwhelming reason to continue to carry too many unprofitable shows with generally unspectacular ratings in prime time, though the networks insisted that they strongly supported the continuing growth of their individual news departments.

Even at the season's high water mark in prime time public affairs, many of television's critics saw a network retreat from the form as inevitable. Though they applauded the material carried by ABC, CBS, and NBC, they began searching for some way to break the iron grip of network influence and control over programming. The UHF system and educational television were two potential tools to that end and both exhibited long overdue development in the 1962–63 season. They had both been created by the FCC in 1952 as the freeze on TV station construction was lifted, but had remained catatonic for nearly a decade.

The commission launched educational television in 1952 with a bold stroke, setting aside 242 station allocations specifically for noncommercial broadcasting. Despite this promising beginning, educational broadcasting experienced very little growth over the next ten years. By 1960, there were only forty-eight educational stations on the air. All but four of them were associated with the fledgling National Educational Television (NET) network, but that only produced eight hours of programming each week. What's more, expensive coaxial cable connections were out of the question, so the filmed shows were sent to the affiliates through the mail. Such cost-cutting measures were necessary because, in setting up noncommercial stations, the FCC had left one important problem unresolved: funding. If the stations were to be noncommercial but also independent of the government, where was the money for operational expenses to come from? A few private corporations, particularly the Ford Foundation, stepped in from the beginning and contributed millions, but it was nowhere near the amount necessary to launch a national chain of stations that could be taken seriously by viewers.

There was an additional problem. Viewers. Many of the frequencies so generously earmarked by the FCC for noncommercial use were on the UHF band. None of the eighteen million television sets in use in 1952 were capable of receiving UHF signals. Stations in a few markets such as KQED in San Francisco and WGBH in Boston were lucky enough to receive VHF allocations, but for the most part viewers could not tune in the educational stations, so there was virtually no audience. More important, by the end of the 1950s, major markets such as New York, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and Washington still had no educational station at all. The near invisible status of noncommercial television reduced it to a very expensive laboratory and made it impossible to stir any interest in improving the situation. Until the important figures in broadcasting and government living in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington could see educational television in operation, a solution to the funding problem would never be worked out.

In order to provide a noncommercial outlet in New York City, a group of New York-based forces (calling themselves Educational Television for the Metropolitan Area) decided to buy an existing commercial VHF station and set it up as a showpiece for educational TV. After protracted delays and legal challenges, the group purchased Newark's WNTA, channel 13, for $6.2 million. One-

FALL 1962 SCHEDULE

Day	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	Network
MON	local	Cheyenne		The Rifleman	STONEY BURKE		Ben Casey		ABC
MON	local	To Tell The Truth	I've Got A Secret	THE LUCY SHOW	Danny Thomas Show	Andy Griffith Show	NEW LORETTA YOUNG SHOW	Stump The Stars	CBS
MON	local	IT'S A MAN'S WORLD		SAINTS AND SINNERS		The Price Is Right	David Brinkley's Journal	local	NBC
TUE	local	COMBAT!		Hawaiian Eye		The Untouchables		Bell And Howell Close Up	ABC
TUE	local	Marshal Dillon	LLOYD BRIDGES SHOW	Red Skelton Hour		Jack Benny Program	Garry Moore Show		CBS
TUE	local	Laramie		EMPIRE		Dick Powell Show		Chet Huntley Reporting	NBC
WED	local	Wagon Train		GOING MY WAY		OUR MAN HIGGINS	Naked City		ABC
WED	local	CBS Reports CBS News Specials		The Many Loves Of Dobie Gillis	THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES	Dick Van Dyke Show	U.S. Steel Hour Armstrong Circle Theater		CBS
WED	local	THE VIRGINIAN			Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall		THE ELEVENTH HOUR		NBC
THR	local	Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet	Donna Reed Show	Leave It To Beaver	My Three Sons	McHALE'S NAVY	Alcoa Premiere Fred Astaire Presenting		ABC
THR	local	Mr. Ed	Perry Mason		THE NURSES		Alfred Hitchcock Hour		CBS
THR	local	WIDE COUNTRY		Dr. Kildare		Hazel	ANDY WILLIAMS SHOW		NBC
FRI	local	THE GALLANT MEN		The Flintstones	I'M DICKENS, HE'S FENSTER	77 Sunset Strip		local	ABC
FRI	local	Rawhide		Route 66		FAIR EXCHANGE		Eyewitness	CBS
FRI	local	International Showtime		Sing Along With Mitch		DON'T CALL ME CHARLIE	JACK PAAR SHOW		NBC
SAT	Beany And Cecil	ROY ROGERS AND DALE EVANS SHOW		MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON	Lawrence Welk Show		Fight Of The Week	Make That Spare	ABC
SAT	local	JACKIE GLEASON SHOW		The Defenders		Have Gun, Will Travel	Gunsmoke		CBS
SAT	local	SAM BENEDICT		New Joey Bishop Show	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies				NBC
SUN	Father Knows Best	THE JETSONS	The ABC Sunday Night Movie				Voice Of Firestone	Howard K. Smith: News And Comment	ABC
SUN	Lassie	Dennis The Menace	Ed Sullivan Show		The Real McCoys	General Electric True	Candid Camera	What's My Line	CBS
SUN	ENSIGN O'TOOLE	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		Car 54, Where Are You?	Bonanza		DuPont Show Of The Week # Dinah Shore Show		NBC

third of the money was donated by CBS, NBC, and ABC, who saw educational television as an excellent way to answer the criticisms leveled at the commercial networks. They could point to their generosity in supporting the noble project even as they continued to concentrate on more profitable popular appeal entertainment. As long as educational television stuck to classroom type programming aimed at the egghead fringe, they knew it would never provide any real competition for the mass audience.

WNTA was renamed WNDT (later changed to WNET) and it hit the New York airwaves on September 16, 1962, as the sixty-eighth educational station in the country. Newton Minow and Ed Murrow hosted the gala opening festivities which were attended by representatives from all three commercial networks. Yet there were conflicting priorities and philosophies among the many divergent interests that had united to establish the new station and these immediately surfaced during the chaotic two-and-one-half-hour premiere broadcast. The networks were most upset by an eighty-three-minute British film which extolled the BBC and labeled American television as 80% junk. They felt the film was a stab in the back after all the support they had given the new station and CBS, NBC, and ABC executives went away angry. The station also faced union problems and had to shut down for two weeks immediately following the premiere telecast in order to resolve them.

When WNDT returned, New Yorkers had an opportunity to see, at last, the wonders of noncommercial television. It was a direct throwback to the very early days of commercial television. Aside from the expected educational fare for children, there were boring discussion shows *(Books for Our Times, Invitation to Art)*, attempts at educational fare for adults *(Russian for Beginners, Face of Sweden)*, an overload of British films, and the inevitable, excruciatingly detailed thirty-minute studies of esoteric subjects such as Japanese brushstroke painting. All were numbing and not very entertaining, but channel 13 was new to broadcasting, short of money, and uncertain which tricks of the trade would work in the world of noncommercial television.

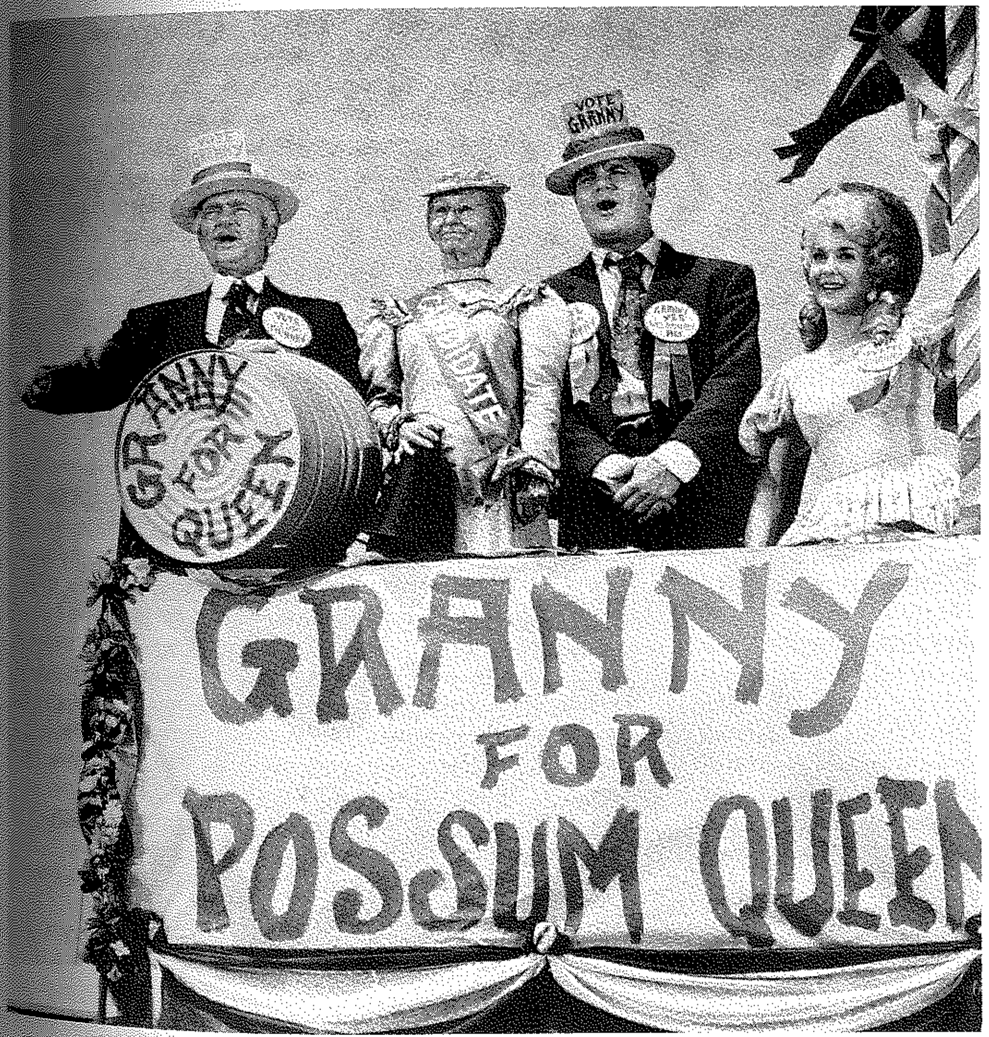
The increased visibility of educational television did bring about important changes, though. The federal government began handing out small yearly subsidies and the Ford Foundation increased the amount of its support. Educational stations started broadcasting (though on UHF) in Washington and Los Angeles, and the NET network developed its first quasi-hits. *International Magazine* was a weekly news feature program put together by foreign broadcasters (chiefly from the BBC) who covered world events as well as reporters on the commercial networks, and sometimes surpassed them. In February 1963, WGBH in Boston began producing *The French Chef* which featured Julia Child demonstrating elaborate cooking techniques. Within a few months she became the network's first star as her imposing figure and distinctive voice appeared on NET stations across the country.

Despite these impressive gains, the fate of educational television ultimately rested with the development of UHF, because that's where most of the educational stations were located.

The UHF system had also begun in 1952 and it faced a long struggle to win support among set manufacturers, viewers, and sponsors. From the beginning, manufacturers saw no reason to spend extra money to include UHF capabilities unless their customers demanded it. The public would not demand UHF until there was something worth watching on the system. Until there were enough sponsors to pay for exciting new programs, there could not be anything worth watching, and with so few viewers, what sponsor would make the investment? For more than two years the status of UHF remained unchanged. In September 1954, following government and industry pressure on the FCC to do something to help the system, the commission amended its rules and increased the number of owned and operated stations a network could possess from five to seven, as long as two were UHF stations. It was assumed that if a network affiliate in a major city were on UHF, there would be sufficient demand by the public to push set manufacturers into beginning production of sets capable of receiving both UHF and VHF signals, thus breaking the stagnant situation. Within two years, CBS and NBC had purchased two UHF stations each and began offering their shows on UHF only to viewers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Hartford, Connecticut (CBS), and New Britain, Connecticut, and Buffalo, New York (NBC). This did not cause any increased demand for UHF sets. Instead, a few interested people purchased expensive special converters that allowed their old sets to pick up both UHF and VHF signals while most simply tuned to another network.

The FCC then decided to attempt a much more sweeping change and announced that it would suggest ordering cities throughout the country to be designated as either all-UHF or all-VHF markets. The problem with "deintermixture" (as the proposed policy was labeled) was that no city wanted to be converted to an all-UHF market, rendering every television set in town useless. The FCC faced intensive lobbying for and against deintermixture, and wavered back and forth throughout 1956 and 1957, though Peoria, Illinois; Madison, Wisconsin; Evansville, Indiana; and Hartford, Connecticut were actually designated as deintermixture test cities. In late 1957, the commission, in effect, opted for "undeintermixture" and allowed the UHF situation to remain unchanged, thus ending any serious efforts for expansion. By 1959, NBC and CBS had sold their UHF stations and the problem remained unsolved for nearly three more years.

In February 1962, the FCC took up the question again and decided to aim directly at the chief stumbling block to the growth of the UHF system, the home receivers themselves. Instead of counting on the subtle pressures of supply and demand to motivate television set manufacturers into including UHF reception capabilities on their sets, the commission proposed to Congress that a law be passed *requiring* the feature on all new American televisions. Throughout the spring, FCC chairman Newton Minow carried on



The Clampett clan: *(from left)* Jed (Buddy Ebsen), Granny (Irene Ryan), Jethro (Max Baer), and Elly May (Donna Douglas). *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*

September 10, 1962
Hugh Downs replaces John Chancellor as major domo of *Today.*

September 10, 1962
Mal Goode becomes the first black network correspondent, covering the United Nations for ABC.

September 19, 1962
The Virginian. (NBC). The first ninety-minute television Western and, like *Bonanza,* it is broadcast in color. Though the series has a strong central cast (Lee J. Cobb, James Drury, and Doug McClure), the stories frequently focus on the weekly guest stars.

September 23, 1962
The Jetsons. (ABC). ABC at last airs its *first* program in color, the premiere of another Hanna-Barbera cartoon series. Essentially *The Flintstones* backwards, the new show is a simple animated family sitcom with the setting moved from the Stone Age to the twenty-first century.

September 27, 1962
The Andy Williams Show. (NBC). Mr. Easy Listening enters the limelight in a series produced by Bud Yorkin and Norman Lear. Andy's television "family" includes the four singing Osmond Brothers (ages seven through twelve) who open with "I'm a Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas."

September 29, 1962
Phase two of *The Avengers* in Britain. Patrick Macnee continues his role as a dapper adventurer, but he is now identified as government agent John Steed, and teamed up with a beautiful woman, the ultra-cool widow Mrs. Catherine Gale (played by Honor Blackman). The writing for the revamped format is much sharper and more innovative: On the first new episode, a double agent is killed while appearing on a television talk show.

an effective lobbying effort, with help from the White House, and salvaged the bill after most observers had given it up for dead. To underscore its strong belief that the proposed law offered the best possible solution to the UHF problem, the FCC announced that if the bill were not passed, it would deintermix eight major markets—immediately. A few days later, Congress passed the bill and the commission set April 30, 1964, as the day the law would take effect. Due to manufacturing production schedules, this meant that the 1965 model sets would be the first with both VHF and UHF capabilities.

Though it would take years for the full ramifications of the new law to be felt, it was obvious that changes in American broadcasting would be monumental. Eventually, most television sets in the country would be capable of receiving UHF signals, thus allowing many more independent commercial stations, as well as most of the country's educational stations, the opportunity to survive and grow. The slow but steady growth of UHF in the late 1960s would also help solve ABC's long-standing problem of not having enough affiliates. By the end of the decade, ABC, for the first time, would have stations carrying its programming into every major American city. Newton Minow's work with the "all-channel" bill would change the shape of American television far more than his vast wasteland speech. Its passage provided a satisfying conclusion to his tenure as commissioner and he resigned from the FCC in 1963, having set into motion forces in television that would continue to grow through the next two decades.

After the period of uncertainty that culminated in the 1960–61 vast wasteland season, the commercial networks themselves were at last coasting into the new decade with confidence, several hit formats, and a sense of control. The 1962–63 season presented a nod toward medical drama (following the success of the previous season's *Ben Casey* and *Dr. Kildare),* several series set in World War II, a surprise revival in variety formats, and an incredibly successful new sitcom. These were added to a schedule that already included strong holdovers in several different formats and some outstanding individual news programs, producing what was, overall, a very good season.

After ABC's performance in the 1961–62 season sent the network back into the cellar, action-adventure whiz Ollie Treyz was forced to walk the plank in March 1962, and the new president, Tom Moore, continued the search for another successful format to bring ABC back into contention. He brought in a revamped schedule for the 1962–63 season which contained the usual ABC potpourri of gimmicks, adding one new one: war. With World War II nearly two decades in the past, it seemed safe for television to restage the conflict, so ABC presented *Gallant Men, Combat!,* and *McHale's Navy. Gallant Men* from Warner Bros. was pure grade-B movie pap that followed the 1943 battle for Italy through the eyes of an American war correspondent who accompanied an infantry squad on vital "suicide" missions that never seemed to endanger him or any other members of the regular cast. The Robert Altman-directed series *Combat!* was more realistic, focusing on the continuing struggles of average soldiers in an infantry unit winding through Europe after D-Day, rather than on supposedly momentous battles that could decide the outcome of the entire war. *Combat!* drew on a consistently good cast of regulars, guest stars, and a first class production unit to develop the personal conflict of men at war into tight drama. The war setting also allowed a good deal of violence and ABC knew that could not hurt in the ratings.

McHale's Navy offered an entirely different view of the same war in a "briny *Bilko*" situation comedy set on an island in the South Pacific. In the true *Bilko* style, the members of the crew under Lieutenant Commander Quinton McHale (Ernest Borgnine) spent most of their time bickering among themselves, gambling, and hatching money-making schemes rather than facing the enemy. Of course, Bilko's adventures had been set in a peacetime Army but McHale's were close enough. The Japanese were usually presented as an unseen threat or convenient plot device rather than a dedicated, visible foe. Borgnine was cast as a lovable conniver, Joe Flynn as the perpetually befuddled C.O., and Tim Conway as the head of McHale's crew of flunkies. Unfortunately, the show suffered from weak scripting and, as if to compensate, most of the characters seemed to be trying too hard to be funny, and their antics paled in comparison to their obvious *Bilko* counterparts. Nonetheless, the series did excel at physical humor and many of the Borgnine-Conway interactions bordered on classic slapstick, often saving the program. The inspired moments of *McHale's Navy* made it funnier than many comedies then on the air (two other new military sitcoms, NBC's *Don't Call Me Charlie* and *Ensign O'Toole,* could barely muster a laugh between them), and the crew managed to survive four seasons, a transplant to the European front, and two theatrical feature films ("McHale's Navy" and "McHale's Navy Joins the Air Force").

As usual, ABC drew on this new programming theme for several more seasons, eventually exploiting nearly every theater of conflict from World War II. Surprisingly, though, the network all but ignored the successful medical format of the previous season and left it to NBC and CBS to produce predictable imitations. *The Nurses* (on CBS) brought the familiar sudsy style of romantic serials to such topical issues as syphilis, thalidomide babies, and drug abuse as well as the struggles of black nurses attempting to make it in medical profession. Naturally, there was an idealistic student nurse and the crusty but compassionate head nurse. For NBC, MGM sent medical drama down the road taken by Warner Bros. in the late 1950s (when it produced a Western that was not a Western, *77 Sunset Strip)* by offering a doctor show that was not quite a doctor show, *The Eleventh Hour.* Though they did not stray far from the operating room, the stories of psychiatrist Theodore Bassett (Wendell Corey) demonstrated that the life, death, and romance found in television's hospitals could be presented within the structure of other occupations in so-called career dramas. The new series managed to incorporate topical and titillating angles such as a frigid woman and her unfaithful husband, illegitimate teenage pregnancy, abortion, and the murder and rape of a girl by a young boy with taints of homosexuality. It was obvious that the format of career drama could be just as soapy as straight medical fare and the studios made plans to develop other spinoffs in the future.

Perhaps the season's biggest surprise was the successful revival of Jackie Gleason's old variety show after several misfired comebacks over the previous five years. It was virtually the same program Gleason had brought to CBS from DuMont a decade earlier (even Art Carney dropped by occasionally) and there was no reason for its revival to work this time. More than likely, the almost total absence of such material from TV for several years, combined with the position Gleason had achieved as one of the medium's immortals, generated enough energy and interest to make the show appear fresh and new again. In any case, there were a few new wrinkles: Most of the skits were placed within the so-called "American Scene Magazine"; and Gleason's Joe the Bartender character was joined every week by comedian Frank Fontaine as the slightly smashed Crazy Guggenheim, whose slurred speech and halfwit manner gave way to a deep operatic voice when he was asked to sing a song. Gleason once again registered high ratings on Saturday night and, within two years, used his clout to move the entire show to "the sun and fun capital of the world," Miami Beach.

Another TV veteran, *Tonight* host Jack Paar, decided the daily routine was too much and moved his variety format intact from his late night slot to prime time on Friday night. During his five years on the *Tonight* show, Paar had cultivated a peculiarly ambivalent image and, in an era of very predictable leading men, was practically the only unpredictable character on TV. He fluctuated between images of a "good-little-boy-who-loves-everybody" and a snarling, slightly blue, cobra that was liable to lash out at enemies, real and imagined, forever prompting the gossip columns to wonder: "What is Jack Paar *really* like?" During his heyday at the turn of the decade, he carried on innumerable public feuds on the air, insulting nationally known entertainers and columnists that had crossed him, even walking off his own show once after an NBC censor had arbitrarily blipped a mildly risqué joke from the day's tape. He made the NBC brass come begging for his return and thereafter he seemed ready and willing to walk off again over other issues, such as his salary and work schedule. Paar had clout with NBC and he knew it. Though his move to prime time left a gaping hole in a slot the network had always found difficult to fill, NBC agreed to it. In prime time, Paar continued his successful approach to variety and interviews, which included a bevy of showbiz celebrity guests (Zsa Zsa Gabor, Jayne Mansfield), up-and-coming young talent (such as writer-turner-comic Woody Allen), nationally known public figures (Richard Nixon was a frequent guest), and home movies depicting his travels to exotic locales of the world. NBC was left with the problem of finding a late night successor.

The network chose Johnny Carson, the host of an ABC daytime game show, *Who Do You Trust?,* for the difficult job of maintaining NBC's lock on late night viewing. Though he had substituted for Paar on the *Tonight* show a number of times, Carson had a very different style and the network was not sure that he could maintain the program's consistently high ratings. NBC brass realized that Paar himself had been in a similar situation in 1957 when he took over the program, and had responded by shaping it to his own style and taste, and into a ratings winner. They felt that Carson probably had the right instincts for the tough job and hoped for similar success. There was one important complication, however. Jack Paar had scheduled his departure from *Tonight* for April 1962 and Carson's contract with ABC did not expire until October. Though

September 30, 1962
The Saint. Former Maverick cousin Roger Moore portrays yet another Anglican spy, the very handsome Simon Templar a.k.a. The Saint, for Britain's ATV network.

September 30, 1962
The final episodes of *Suspense* and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* air on CBS Radio, quietly ending the era of scripted network radio drama series. The drama anthology *Suspense* had aired continuously since 1942. *Johnny Dollar,* airing off and on since 1949, had featured multiple performers (most notably Bob Bailey, from 1955 to 1960) in the title role of an insurance investigator who narrates each story as part of his expense account report, concluding with the signature sign-off, "Yours truly, Johnny Dollar."

October 1, 1962
The Merv Griffin Show. (NBC). The former singer and game show host tries his hand at an hour-long afternoon talk show, with help from such writers as Pat McCormick and Dick Cavett. This daytime version of *Tonight* fades by April.

April 1, 1963
Twenty-six-year-old Fred Silverman, who, during the late 1950s, did his masters thesis at Ohio State on ABC's programming schedule, becomes chief daytime programmer for CBS.

May 12, 1963
CBS bars twenty-one-year-old Bob Dylan from singing "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues" on *The Ed Sullivan Show,* even though Sullivan approved it. Dylan takes a hike and refuses to appear at all.

May 14, 1963
Newton Minow resigns as FCC chairman.

May 15, 1963
Gordon Cooper sends the first live television pictures from an American astronaut in orbit, but NASA refuses to allow the networks to show them.

August 30, 1963
The final weekday appearance of *American Bandstand.* Beginning September 7, the program will appear only on Saturday afternoons.

he had been allowed to moonlight as host on a part time basis in the past, ABC refused to let him start a permanent stint on another network before his contract ran out. This resulted in a five-month interregnum that provided a golden opportunity for anyone else to attempt to snatch the late night audience from NBC. The network hung tight with guest hosts joining Paar's number two man, Hugh Downs, who remained on hand to provide some continuity. The expected challenge to the *Tonight* show came, ironically, from a former host of the program, Steve Allen, whose latest variety show for ABC had been foundering. Allen was signed by the Westinghouse (Group W) stations to host a pre-taped late night talk show that was syndicated throughout the country and run in direct competition with NBC. With a few months head start on Carson, Allen's new show, produced by Allan Sherman, managed to maintain respectable ratings (lasting until 1964) even without his old familiar family of supporting performers. It was clear that Carson's task would not be easy.

Carson took over *Tonight* on October 1, 1962, bringing along his game show cohort, Ed McMahon, as his number two man. (Hugh Downs left the show in September to become the host of the morning *Today* program.) Like Paar, Carson grew comfortably into the job and tailored the show to fit his style, shifting the emphasis from variety to light talk. He carefully limited his involvement as a central performer to his daily monologue and occasional sketches, preferring instead the role of overall program manipulator whose main job was to keep up the pace by steering guests into productive areas of conversation (interesting, funny, ribald) and injecting humorous barbs. By not overextending himself, Carson was able to maintain viewer interest in his personality (a mixture of Midwestern farm boy naiveté and Hollywood brashness), even without a familiar family of guests (McMahon and the band were the only regulars). He brought a relaxing charisma to the late night slot and was soon known to all simply as "Johnny." The *Tonight* show withstood challenges mounted both in syndication (Mike Douglas and Merv Griffin) and on the other networks (Les Crane and Joey Bishop), and Carson remained as host of the slot longer than Jerry Lester, Steve Allen, and Jack Paar combined, giving NBC unquestioned supremacy in late night programming into the 1990s.

For the rest of the broadcast day, though, CBS ruled the ratings. At one time in the 1962–63 season, CBS had all of the top ten daytime shows and eighteen of the top twenty prime time shows. Network president James Aubrey's decision to develop CBS's traditional strength, situation comedy, paid off far beyond his expectations. Though there were a few flops such as *Fair Exchange* (an attempt to expand sitcoms to a sixty-minute format) and the transplanted *Real McCoys* (with only Luke, Grandpa, and Pepino left), the new vehicle for Lucille Ball was an outright smash. In *The Lucy Show* she was reunited with Vivian Vance and played yet another TV widow trying to raise her children, outfox her boss (the omnipresent Gale Gordon), and earn extra money. Lucy quickly returned to the top ten alongside Jack Benny, Andy Griffith, and Danny Thomas. By February, the increasingly popular Dick Van Dyke joined their ranks.

And then there were the Clampetts.

The Beverly Hillbillies opened to some of the worst reviews in TV history. Critics tore the show apart for its many obvious faults: The plots were abysmal, the dialogue childish, and the production Hollywood-to-the-core. What they failed to recognize or perhaps refused to accept was that the program was extremely funny. Viewers apparently had no difficulty detecting the comic strengths of the show because, within six weeks of its premiere, it became the number one show in the nation. Not since *The $64,000 Question* had a new program risen to the top so fast.

Like *Lucy, Bilko,* and *The Honeymooners, The Beverly Hillbillies* respected the basics of situation comedy. It contained both a humorous premise and central characters that had the potential for continuous exploitation week after week. Another product of the mind of Paul Henning (from *The Real McCoys),* the show presented a family of Ozark hillbillies who moved to California after striking oil on their property and becoming fabulously wealthy. The dichotomy of a hillbilly clan living in a sumptuous Beverly Hills mansion provided two important sources of humor: the naiveté of the Clampetts as they persisted in their backwoods manners and morals in posh Beverly Hills, and the specious sham of Beverly Hills itself as snobby rich people put aside their exclusive standards and bowed to the Clampett fortune. A careful mixture of craziness and sanity in the cast of characters allowed this setup to work perfectly as Henning took the make up of *I Love Lucy* and turned it on its head. In *I Love Lucy,* the generally realistic premise set Lucy as the "zany but lovable madcap" in a normally sane world. *The Beverly Hillbillies* was just the opposite. The premise was implausible, so Henning placed one rational mind in an otherwise madcap, lunatic world.

Jed Clampett (Buddy Ebsen) provided the oasis of reason among the loco characters. Jed was a simple backwoods man who possessed most of the admirable traits connected with rural folks: he was decent, unpretentious, and sagacious. More than anyone else in the show, Jed understood not only his immediate family but the strange breed of people living in Beverly Hills as well. He quickly figured out how the big city folks operated, but he never assimilated, keeping his mountain clothes and downhome drawl despite his new-found wealth. Only Jed, the family and neighborhood peacemaker, kept his head while everyone else engaged in heated spats and irrational flights of fancy. Without him, the Clampett house and the program itself would have collapsed into anarchistic rubble.

With Jed as a central hub of normality, the lunatic characters of the show could take off, as the philosophies and manners of Beverly Hills met those of the Ozark Mountains head on. Jed's mother-in-law, Granny (Irene Ryan), was an unreconstructed Confederate always ready to fly into a rage against the forces of modern America. She never accepted her new surroundings as her real home, remaining convinced that nothing in California would ever come close to what she had left behind in the hills. Granny made no attempt to hide her disdain for the city folks and waged a never-ending war with anyone she saw attempting to upset her way of life. That included practically everybody.

Elly May (Donna Douglas), Jed's beautiful but unmarried daughter, was also off in a world of her own, though she had no quarrel with normal society as long as it played by the rules she was familiar with. Consequently, she continued to act the way she felt any normal girl should act, perpetually dumbfounding potential suitors by ignoring the traditional shy demure pose of young debutantes and persisting in her tomboyish independence. Elly May loved animals, from horned toads to goats, and was also proud to display her physical strength, easily outwrestling any prospective husband. She never appreciated the fact that she had moved into an entirely new world and she could never understand why she had so little success in finding a mate in the wilds of Beverly Hills.

Elly May was a clarion of clarity compared to her cousin, Jethro Bodine (Max Baer, son of the former heavyweight champ). He was the quintessential country rube, a refugee from the sixth grade who had no difficulty understanding the big city: it was one huge playground. Very much a ten-year-old mind in a twenty-year-old body, he engaged in childish mischief playing with such Beverly Hills toys as hot rods, swimmin' pools, and movie stars. More than anyone else, Jethro needed the constant attention of his Uncle Jed for discipline and guidance, so that he would not be swept away by the distractions and excitement of the city and lose his hillbilly roots.

Trying to uphold the reputation of Beverly Hills were Jed's banker, Milburn Drysdale (Raymond Bailey), and his secretary, Jane Hathaway (Nancy Kulp). The pair provided an upper class mirror of the Clampetts, funny in their own marvelously lampooned world and even funnier when they tried to imitate the hillbilly ways of their clients. Drysdale filled the traditional sitcom image of a business executive: He was a dimwitted, amoral schemer driven totally by the possession and acquisition of money. Beyond that, Drysdale constantly humiliated himself to satisfy every whim of the Clampetts. He could not risk the possibility that they might move their boodle elsewhere, so he willingly bent every rule of genteel conduct for them. Miss Hathaway was a stuck-up, overeducated snobbish big business secretary who was as totally dedicated to pleasing the Clampetts as her boss and she effectively bullied anyone who dared cross her path. The two were models of self-serving dedication and they stood at the center of high society's world as it fell to the hillbillies.

In spite of all the reviewers who told viewers *The Beverly Hillbillies* was a stupid show, the audience laughed. It really did not matter that the plots were innocuous and the dialogue quite silly. The characters were genuinely amusing and it was a joy to see them go through their paces. The program was an exaggerated farce, in the tradition of television's most cherished comedy shows. And it was funny.

The overwhelming success of *The Beverly Hillbillies,* and comedy in general in 1962–63, propelled CBS to an astounding lead in nighttime ratings. On the average, CBS's prime time schedule earned higher ratings that year than any other network schedule in television's past. Added to its total domination of daytime programming, the season's prime time success made CBS appear invincible, and most of the hit shows looked as if they could last for years. More important, the success of *The Beverly Hillbillies* and veteran *Andy Griffith* convinced not only CBS, but the industry at large, that rural-based situation comedies were the new key to the public's heart.

Once again, the networks stood ready to give the public exactly what it wanted. In abundance.

cross the Ocean

D AS THE UNDISPUTED KING of television programming in 1963 and network president James d to consolidate that position in the new fall line-up. the time slots of a few veterans, added several new and variety programs, and began the seemingly endless ession of country clones from the wildly successful *Beverly llbillies.* As Aubrey was fine-tuning the prime time schedule, CBS News moved to regain its preeminence in the nightly news race, one of the few program periods where the network was not number one. Though CBS was the acknowledged leader in producing news documentaries, the much more commercially lucrative nightly news slot was then consistently dominated by NBC's *Huntley-Brinkley Report.*

The perpetual battle between the CBS and NBC news departments had begun on the radio in the late 1930s. In an era dominated by a reliance on outside wire services for the latest headlines, CBS had taken the lead in developing its own news-gathering operation. During World War II, Edward R. Murrow's live on-the-spot reports from England allowed the entire country to share the dramatic events in Europe, and put CBS far out in front of NBC in news prestige and ratings. As the networks set up their television news operations in the 1940s, CBS took the lead in this new medium by using a constant, familiar figure as its nightly news anchor-young Douglas Edwards. By 1950, NBC's slick professional newsreel show, *Camel News Caravan* with John Cameron Swayze, had passed Edwards and had remained at the top for several years, fading from number one in the mid-1950s as the public tired of Swayze's overly theatrical style. In 1956, NBC replaced him with Chet Huntley and David Brinkley, a news team that had proved very popular covering the political conventions that year, and by 1958 it was on top once again with *The Huntley-Brinkley Report,* retaining that lead into the 1960s.

Despite the strong competition between the two networks, their fifteen-minute TV news programs were remarkably similar and stuck to the simple formula of a news anchor reading the headlines for major news items and covering a few stories in moderate detail, possibly with accompanying film. The network news departments could cover scheduled special events such as presidential elections quite well, but were limited to a handful of cities for breaking stories. The two news giants had only recently begun acting like independent news organizations at all by setting up their own camera crews and bureaus in their New York, Washington, and Chicago locations, but it remained virtually impossible for them to cover adequately events in most other American cities. The networks still had to rely on local affiliates for film footage and reports from out in the hustings. In December 1961, CBS announced a major change in its news-gathering operation as it established four additional domestic bureaus—in Los Angeles, Denver, Atlanta, and Dallas—to give the network the capability of covering, on its own, almost any news event in the United States. The expansion allowed the CBS nightly news program to shift from the leisurely newsreel style of the past to a roving reporter format that encouraged its bureau heads, such as Dan Rather in Dallas (newly hired from Houston's KHOU), to dig for stories and move immediately on major events. Accompanying this reorganization behind-the-scenes was an important on-camera substitution. After sixteen years as anchor, Douglas Edwards was deftly deposed by CBS and replaced by Walter Cronkite, a newsman who had been CBS's man at political conventions, elections, and space shots for more than a decade and who had already become, in the public's eye, Mr. CBS News. Cronkite took over the show in April 1962, and CBS hoped that his proven ability to engender public trust would attract more viewers than the effective but somehow distant Edwards. These changes set the stage for the most important move of all: expanding the length of the nightly news show, which had remained at fifteen minutes since its inception in the 1940s. With the number of network bureaus more than doubled, fifteen minutes was not enough time to present all the stories they could turn out. Though affiliates were reluctant to surrender lucrative local news time to an expanded national newscast, after intensive lobbying by the network, the locals agreed.

On September 2, 1963, CBS launched its expanded news program with a new set, a new regular feature, a special opening night interview, and an intense publicity campaign usually reserved only for fall premieres of entertainment programs. In a departure from the traditional sparse studio news set, CBS placed Cronkite at a desk directly in the newsroom itself, with other people working at their own desks visible in the background, and the noise of the news teletype machines audible as well. He was joined by Eric Sevareid, who began fourteen years of nightly commentary and analysis that evening. As a special opening night attraction, CBS aired a lengthy, exclusive interview Cronkite had conducted with President Kennedy, in which they discussed Vietnam, civil rights, and the 1964 election—topics that the expanded news programs could begin to cover with regularity and depth never before possible on television. One week later, NBC expanded *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* to thirty minutes (including its own exclusive interview with President Kennedy), and joined the shift to the more comprehensive approach to the news. Network news had done more that double in length; its quality had improved tremendously in the process.

When the fall's new entertainment programs appeared, though, news once again receded into the background and viewers began selecting their favorites for the season. To no one's surprise, CBS continued its domination of prime time television with *The Beverly Hillbillies* again in the number one spot and situation comedy in general thriving. There was also considerable interest in variety because two major entertainment figures who had for years avoided television series commitments signed up for new weekly programs: Judy Garland and Jerry Lewis. Neither show survived the season.

Judy Garland had triumphed the previous season in a low-key, easy-going special with friends Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, and she had agreed to try the weekly grind for CBS by continuing that same style of program with Norman Jewison as producer. Unfortunately, this mood was not successfully transplanted to her series which suffered from some inconsistent writing and inappropriate casting. Jerry Van Dyke (younger brother of Dick) was given the "show-within-a-show" role of Judy's teacher in TV technique. The boisterous Van Dyke personality was completely at odds with Garland's and the hoped-for humorous interactions between the two fell flat. Occasionally particular guest star segments of the show worked well, such as Garland's numbers with her young daughter, Liza Minnelli, and up-and-coming young singer Barbra Streisand, but the success of the program rested on the weekly scripts and Garland's overall performance, and both were far too erratic. Against the steadily increasing strength of NBC's *Bonanza,* the show brought in embarrassingly low ratings, despite the strong lead-in provided by Ed Sullivan. Garland went through several producers before her program quietly expired in the spring.

ABC took the biggest variety gamble of the season by providing a 120-minute vehicle for TV's *enfant terrible,* Jerry Lewis. The network invested nearly $9 million in the project, including a share of the expensive, extensive remodeling of the El Capitan theater in Hollywood (scene of Richard Nixon's Checkers speech) to serve as the locale for the show. Besides being live (in an era when nearly every other show was on film or tape), the series violated several unwritten laws of prime time television. Variety shows were usually given a one-hour block to fill; Lewis's new live show was two hours every week. Network prime time schedules normally ended at 11:00 P.M.; Lewis's show ran from 9:30 P.M. until 11:30 P.M. Most variety shows stocked themselves with a family of secondary comics and singers to help ease the pressure on the host; Lewis tried to carry the whole show by himself, relying only on guest appearances by his well-known showbiz friends for support. Lewis was certainly funny enough to carry his own television show but, in this case, he tried too many innovations at once, and the program fell flat in its premiere. Everybody appeared tense. Camera shots and mike cues were off. A huge screen set up so that the studio audience could see the show just as it was seen by the home audience failed to work and ended up blocking their view. With the audience blinded, Lewis's timing was thrown off. Worst of all, the skits were bad. Reviewers labeled it a "tasteless flop" and the program never recovered. The harder Lewis worked, the more frantic the show seemed to get, never settling down to acquire any style, pace, or direction. Instead of being an "informal two hours of fun, entertainment, discussion, and interviews in a spontaneous atmosphere" it took on the appearance of a weekly Jerry Lewis telethon containing a few entertaining performances by superstar guests amid extended stretches of clumsy filler. Perhaps *The Jerry Lewis Show* might have had a chance if it had been only one hour long so that the writers would not have been so desperate for material, or if it had been prerecorded on tape so that some of the more complicated bits could have been staged several times and reworked. Even against such tough competition as *Gunsmoke* and the NBC movie, Lewis might have then triumphed instead of being clobbered by them. In December, ABC, making the best of a bad situation, paid Lewis $2 million to tear up the contract for forty shows. Lewis closed his final show in anger, blaming his failure on the networks and sponsors who, he said, did not like his "non-conformist ideas." "I don't like to do like I'm supposed to!" he explained.

Though Lewis was gone, ABC was still stuck with the remodeled El Capitan theater. In a surprise move, the network decided to replace the flopped Jerry Lewis variety show with another variety show from the same theater. What's more, *The Hollywood Palace* (as both the series and theater were rechristened) did not even have a regular host. Instead, the program used guest stars as hosts to what was essentially a sixty-minute vaudeo show straight out of the *Toast of the Town* mold, featuring eight different acts that were presented in the lavish, almost garish, setting of the cavernous Hollywood Palace. Although originating in Hollywood, the show brought the look and feel of Las Vegas-style revues to network television. Apparently, the absence of such material on other networks and the wide range of guest hosts (from Bing Crosby to Phyllis Diller) made the show appear fresh and exciting because, against all odds, it caught on and lasted until the end of the decade.

The Hollywood Palace was another case of a classic format being revived and updated for a new generation of viewers, just as sitcoms such as *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and drama programs such as *The Defenders* had successfully brought these forms into the 1960s. Though some mourned the passing of the originals, especially in live drama, it was necessary and inevitable for television to move on. In June of 1963, the *U.S. Steel Hour* and the *Armstrong Circle Theater* were axed, and at the end of the 1963–64 season, the last of the New York-based drama series, David Susskind's *DuPont Show of the Week,* was also canceled. The concept of weekly live drama (or live-on-tape) had fit well with television's early years but seemed an anachronism in an age of mass entertainment shows and high pressure ratings races. More important, though the golden age of television produced many priceless moments, it had been elevated, in memory, to a higher position than it ever deserved. There were, after all, many very bad live dramas, and the productions were often not really the thrilling challenge many people fondly looked back on. Upon the demise of his *DuPont Show,* David Susskind, who had carried on live drama almost single-handedly for the past few years, candidly acknowledged that the excitement of staging such drama was mostly "hallucinatory; like the kicks induced by cocaine, it's not worth the hangover." With the avenues opened by filmed series, it seemed ridiculous to endure the physical limitations of the studio, the omnipresent feeling of claustrophobia, and the occasional minor but distracting fluffs of live productions. Film was easier to work with, cost about the same, and, if handled with discipline and skill, could rival the best work from the golden age of television.

Susskind's Talent Associates achieved artistic success in a filmed series that very season with *East Side, West Side,* a career drama modeled somewhat after *The Defenders.* The series was shot in New York City and dealt with contemporary social problems faced by a Manhattan social worker, Neil Brock (George C. Scott) and his secretary, Jane Foster (Cicely Tyson). Each week's episode

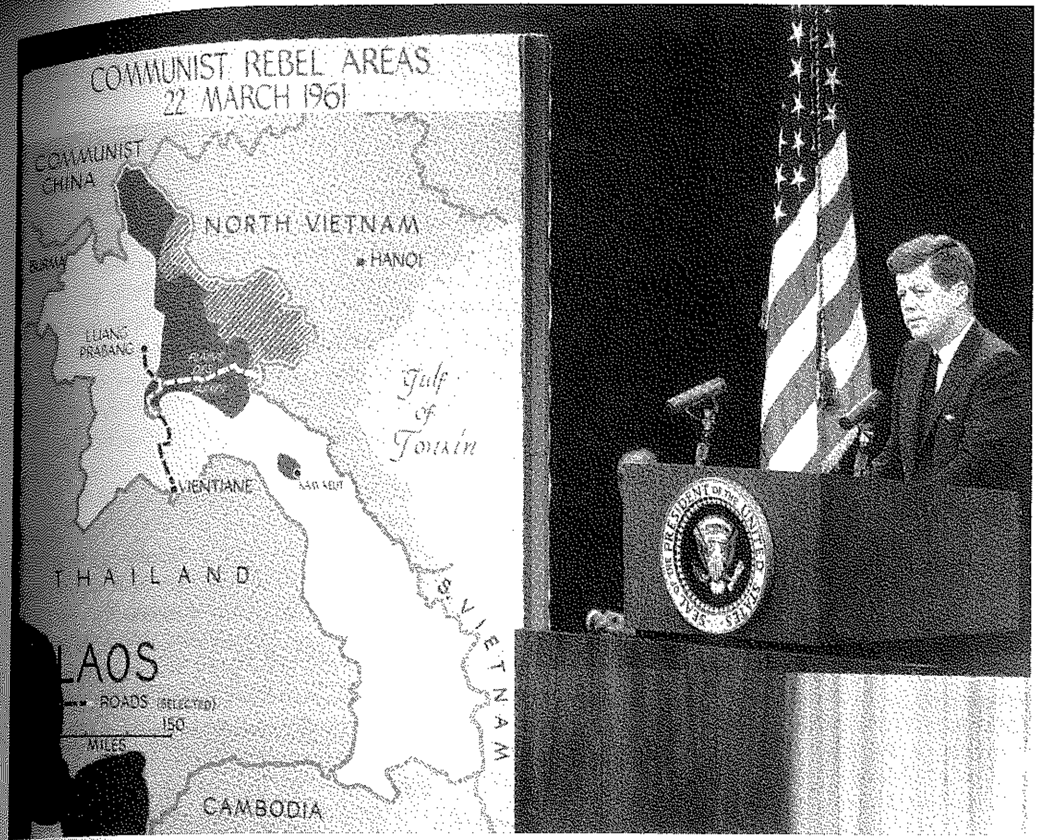
FALL 1963 SCHEDULE

		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
MON	ABC	local	THE OUTER LIMITS		Wagon Train			BREAKING POINT	
	CBS	local	To Tell The Truth	I've Got A Secret	The Lucy Show	Danny Thomas Show	Andy Griffith Show	EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE	
	NBC	local	NBC Monday Night At The Movies				HOLLYWOOD AND THE STARS	Sing Along With Mitch	
TUE	ABC	local	Combat!		McHale's Navy	THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH		THE FUGITIVE	
	CBS	local	Marshal Dillon	Red Skelton Hour		PETTICOAT JUNCTION	Jack Benny Program	Garry Moore Show	
	NBC	local	MR. NOVAK		Redigo	RICHARD BOONE SHOW		Andy Williams Show Bell Telephone Hour	
WED	ABC	local	Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet	PATTY DUKE SHOW	The Price Is Right	Ben Casey		CHANNING	
	CBS	local	CBS Reports CHRONICLES		GLYNIS	The Beverly Hillbillies	Dick Van Dyke Show	DANNY KAYE SHOW	
	NBC	local	The Virginian			ESPIONAGE		The Eleventh Hour	
THR	ABC	local	The Flintstones	Donna Reed Show	My Three Sons	JIMMY DEAN SHOW		Sid Caesar Show EDIE ADAMS SHOW	local
	CBS	local	Password	Rawhide		Perry Mason		The Nurses	
	NBC	local	TEMPLE HOUSTON		Dr. Kildare		Hazel	KRAFT SUSPENSE THEATER # Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall	
FRI	ABC	local	77 Sunset Strip		BURKE'S LAW		THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER	Fight Of The Week	Make That Spare
	CBS	local	GREAT ADVENTURE		Route 66		The Twilight Zone	Alfred Hitchcock Hour	
	NBC	local	International Showtime		BOB HOPE PRESENTS THE CHRYSLER THEATER # Bob Hope Show		HARRY'S GIRLS	Jack Paar Show	
SAT	ABC	local	Hootenanny		Lawrence Welk Show		JERRY LEWIS SHOW (to 11:30)		
	CBS	local	Jackie Gleason Show		NEW PHIL SILVERS SHOW	The Defenders		Gunsmoke	
	NBC	local	THE LIEUTENANT		Joey Bishop Show	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies			
SUN	ABC	local	THE TRAVELS OF JAMIE McPHEETERS		ARREST AND TRIAL			100 GRAND	ABC News Reports
	CBS	Lassie	MY FAVORITE MARTIAN	Ed Sullivan Show		JUDY GARLAND SHOW		Candid Camera	What's My Line
	NBC	BILL DANA SHOW	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		GRINDL	Bonanza		DuPont Show Of The Week NBC Specials	

focused on a particular aspect of the seamy side of the big city such as prostitution, juvenile delinquency, and inadequate housing, and often developed into something of a social docudrama on the injustices of American life, with Scott and Tyson sometimes used only peripherally as part of the discussion. In spite of such a potentially dry format, many episodes were gems of insight and warmth (such as James Earl Jones's portrayal of an enraged but powerless Harlem father whose baby had died of a rat bite) and the series emerged as one of the best attempts ever to combine dramatic entertainment with social commentary. Nonetheless, there was not very much latitude in the show's premise; as a mere social worker Scott could do little but offer words of advice when confronted with yet another problem. In a mid-season attempt to remedy this shortcoming, Scott's character went to work for a local congressman so that possible solutions could be presented. Despite the first class writing and production, and the variation in format, the show never succeeded in shaking off its generally maudlin tone and vanished after only one season.

The most successful new drama of the season was ABC's *The Fugitive*, a Quinn Martin production. Rather than dealing with all the social ills of the country, it focused on the struggle of one man, Dr. Richard Kimble, an outlaw that society was out to destroy. Created by former *Maverick* producer Roy Huggins, the series was loosely inspired by the real-life 1950s murder case of Dr. Sam Shepard, with elements of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* and *Route 66* thrown in. *The Fugitive* followed the flight of Dr. Kimble (David Janssen), who had been unjustly accused and convicted of murdering his wife, but who had managed to escape his police guard and execution in the confusion following the wreck of the train carrying him to the death house. Though free, Kimble faced the twin tasks of finding a mysterious one-armed man he had seen leaving the scene of the crime (but who could not be found at the time of the trial) and evading the pursuit of police Lieutenant Philip Gerard (Barry Morse) who was "obsessed with his capture."

In a TV world populated almost exclusively by winners, Kimble was a loser, free to go anywhere he wanted in the United States, but living in constant fear of capture. He was a prisoner of the entire country because anyone, even those he befriended in his travels, could turn him in, wittingly or unwittingly. Whenever Kimble found himself becoming too involved in people's lives, he would "clam up" and attempt to fade into the background, unnoticed. As a convicted murderer under a death sentence, any move that made him stand out, however briefly, was literally a life-and-death gamble. Yet despite the risks, he was inevitably drawn into other people's lives because he needed them in order to evade the law, track the one-armed man, and escape his own loneliness. Janssen's low-key acting style captured perfectly the behavior of a man on the run, down to the guarded mannerisms and nervous tics of a fugitive. His sad, quick smile (a brief rise in one corner of his mouth while the rest of his face remained immobile) said it all: Dr. Kimble could never find true peace, even if he met people who believed in his innocence; he had to keep running and to find the one-armed man because the alternative for him was death. No amount of human kindness could change that cold, hard fact. The tension created by this setup gave the series an underlying dramatic edge that was skillfully underplayed but constantly present.



Throughout his time in office, President John Kennedy regularly held televised news conferences that covered both domestic issues and international issues. *(National Archives Photo by Abbie Rowe/National Park Service)*

In many ways, *The Fugitive* was a program ahead of its time, presenting the intense struggle of a truly alienated American years before the phrase became popular. Other characters such as Maverick and Paladin had operated on a different moral plane than traditional society, but they had chosen that life, thrived on it, and could one day probably settle somewhere without much difficulty. Richard Kimble could never let down his guard, relax, and rejoin normal society. He had been forced outside its boundaries by its legal machinery even though he was innocent, and his only chance for survival rested with his own individual strength and determination. Until he could find a man the police forces had been unable to locate, even while dodging these same forces himself, Kimble was an outcast, a hunted man as well as a hunter. In the late 1960s, television and movies tried to exploit the feeling of alienation that seemed to grip many people in the country then, but most of those vehicles were shallow and failed to grasp the scope of emotions involved. *The Fugitive* managed to handle the concept of alienation with considerably more success and at the same time treat more complex themes of justice, guilt, and justified paranoia as well. Though such themes had previously appeared on TV, chiefly in the extinct drama anthologies, *The Fugitive* developed them over time in a well produced weekly series. It took four years for Richard Kimble to come face-to-face with the one-armed man. Through it all, the series maintained strong ratings (it was frequently in the top ten) and a loyal audience that found itself caught up in both the characters and the premise, as the series seemed to touch an almost hidden vein of American sympathies.

The refinement of themes and formats from television's early days was not limited to entertainment programs. One of the devastating issues of the 1950s, blacklisting, popped up again, even though it had been assumed that the triumph of John Henry Faulk in 1962 had marked the end of the odious practice. It had not.

In early 1963, ABC decided to latch onto the latest teen music fad, folk music, with *Hootenanny*, a weekly series taped on various college campuses. For the April premiere program, the reigning queen of American folk music, Joan Baez, was slated to appear with Pete Seeger, the man who had invented the word "hootenanny" along with Woody Guthrie. Then ABC announced that it would not accept Seeger because of his well-known leftist politics and, in particular, because on August 18, 1955, during the height of blacklisting, he had refused to answer questions put to him by the House Un-American Activities Committee on his Communist Party ties. Blacklisting was not dead, and ABC was not alone in its apprehension over Seeger. In January 1962, NBC had vetoed a scheduled appearance by Seeger on *The Jack Paar Show* and, in early 1963, CBS had done the same to his planned participation in a folk music special. The networks were still wary of controversial figures and allegations of subversive activities, and now relied on a policy of "network censorship" (the phrase seemed less McCarthy-esque than blacklisting) to protect themselves. Though the controversy over Seeger and the issue of his blacklisting soon faded, the issue of censorship remained and, six years later, Seeger would once again bring it to a head.

Hootenanny's premiere went on without Seeger. And without Joan Baez, the Greenbriar Boys, Tom Paxton, and Ramblin' Jack Elliott, who all refused to perform on the program in protest. Despite this inauspicious beginning, the show recovered and became a surprise hit, hanging on through the spring and summer to earn a niche in ABC's fall schedule for 1963. *Hootenanny* was an effective outlet for folk music and introduced many performers

September 15-21, 1963
ABC, which premiered its new shows late the previous season, experiments by unveiling all of its new fall shows in one "sneak preview" week. In the process, the number three network beats NBC and CBS out of the starting block.

September 15, 1963
100 Grand. (ABC). Live, from New York, an attempt to bring big money quizzes back to television after four years of exile. Emcee Jack Clark directs grimacing contestants through the "new" but all-too-familiar formula (instead of isolation booths there are big soundproof bubbles). It is the biggest flop in years and the show is axed on September 29.

September 15, 1963
Arrest and Trial. (ABC). The gimmick: Tie two forty-five minute shows together with a common plot. In the "arrest" portion, Ben Gazzara plays the cop who tracks down and captures the accused criminal. Chuck Connors plays the defense counselor in the courtroom *denouement.* Problem: One of the stars has to be proved wrong!

September 16, 1963
The Outer Limits. (ABC). A well-written science fiction anthology series with a distinctive flair for frightening monsters and scary plot twists. After building a respectable following on Monday night, the program is torpedoed in its second season when ABC moves it opposite CBS's Saturday night powerhouse, *The Jackie Gleason Show.*

September 17, 1963
The Fugitive. (ABC). The day the running starts.

September 24, 1963
Petticoat Junction. (CBS). Paul Henning begins spinning off successful series from *The Beverly Hillbillies.*

September 24, 1963
Mr. Novak. (NBC). James Franciscus plays a Dr. Kildare of the classroom, with Dean Jagger in the mentor-principal Dr. Gillespie style role.

previously unknown to the American public, including Canada's Ian and Sylvia (Tyson), Ireland's Clancy Brothers, and natives such as the Simon Sisters (Carly and Lucy), the Smothers Brothers, and the very all-American Chad Mitchell Trio. At the same time, the show displayed little musical and emotional connection with the new wave of folk protest then in vogue. It was the folk equivalent to the Dick Clark *Beechnut Show,* presenting a new form of music in an antiseptic forum. Host Jack Linkletter (Art's son) was, like Dick Clark, more a clean-cut announcer than someone in tune with the spirit of the music. He and the producers were content with the happy-go-lucky song-around-a-campfire style of such safe singers as Glenn Yarbrough and the Limeliters, the Rooftop Singers, and the New Christy Minstrels, and they tried to avoid the controversy inherent in protest figures like Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, and Pete Seeger. Though *Hootenanny* lasted the season, it, and the entire folk music boom, was soon outdistanced by a seemingly brand new musical style that slipped in from over the horizon.

In October 1963, *The Ed Sullivan Show* featured British singer Cliff Richard, who had been the reigning king of rock'n'roll in Britain for five years, but had never made a dent in the American charts. Then, in November, Sullivan met with young British impresario Brian Epstein, who managed that country's hottest group, The Beatles. Something was up. Sullivan, a man who had made his name in television being one step ahead of the public's mood, was devoting attention to the British brand of rock'n'roll, a form then often ridiculed, if not completely ignored, in the U.S.

Ed Sullivan had actually been a little late in picking up on the previous major teen phenomenon, Elvis Presley, so he might have been more attuned to reports in the British press about a new generation of successful homegrown rockers. A frequent traveler to Europe, Sullivan was struck by the frantic reception teenagers there had given The Beatles, a reaction the British press had already dubbed "Beatlemania." Brian Epstein's subsequent pitch to feature The Beatles on Sullivan's show was perfectly timed, coming just a week after the group had stolen the show at Britain's annual Royal Command Performance variety show. The two men agreed that The Beatles would be headliners on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in February 1964. At that point, in American music circles, The Beatles were considered just another British act that had been successful in England but were unable to stir any interest in the United States, and the first class treatment accorded the band by Sullivan seemed highly unusual. After all, they had never performed in America and three singles released in the U.S. in 1963 had gone nowhere. By the time Sullivan introduced The Beatles to his audience on February 9, 1964, his agreement seemed nothing short of brilliant. They were the number one group in the nation with records topping both the single and album charts. In just over two months, an extensive push by their new American record company, Capitol, had helped to turn The Beatles into a national mania, and their song "I Want To Hold Your Hand" had become one of the fastest selling records ever released. Millions of Americans were eager to see the group perform live for the first time.

It was a peculiar evening. More than sixty percent of the American television audience (almost twenty-five million homes) tuned to CBS, driven both by eager kids and curious adults. The Beatles opened and closed the show and in the space of one hour were transformed from motionless publicity photos to real live human beings with distinct individual personalities: Ringo Starr, the plain one with the big nose, sat in the back, "pounding them skins;" George Harrison, the quiet mysterious one, played lead guitar while Paul McCartney and John Lennon handled (respectively) bass and rhythm guitars as well as the lead vocals. Paul was the cute one while John ("Sorry girls, he's married") projected more of a tough guy image. Just as Presley had his hip swivel, The Beatles displayed their own distinctive symbol, a mop-top hair style that shook as they sang, "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!" during another big hit song, "She Loves You." Besides seeing and hearing the group perform, viewers were also exposed to their first direct dose of Beatlemania in the U.S. as the studio cameras focused on hundreds of teenage girls in the audience weeping, screaming, and even fainting. Parents did not know whether to laugh at the group and the screaming fans or condemn them, but kids across the country drank it all in. In that one night, as television allowed millions to share an experience as one, the medium helped to establish a musical and cultural phenomenon.

Ironically, despite their British persona, The Beatles were essentially bringing American music back home, filtered and refined through their fresh eyes. They drew on rock'n'roll from the Presley era, rhythm and blues, rockabilly, and even a touch of Broadway. Nonetheless, their distinctive accents and dress and powerful sound made them appear totally new, and their overnight exposure to millions of Americans helped create an instant interest in other British rock groups such as The Dave Clark Five and The Rolling Stones, who soon turned up on shows such as Sullivan's and *The Hollywood Palace.* In addition, the desire for *anything* English, which had been building with an increasingly successful series of theatrical films on British secret agent James Bond, exploded into nearly every aspect of American culture with the coming of The Beatles. Television executives now took a closer look at adapting British material for the American market. This was a distinct change from the image British television had carried throughout the 1950s.

Under the watchful eye of the British government, the noncommercial British Broadcasting Corporation had always followed a philosophy that steered away from the pure entertainment programs that shaped American television. In September 1955, after much wrangling, commercial television came to Britain and began to compete with the BBC. At first, the newcomers relied heavily on imported American filmed series, turning out only a few of their own that made the return trip to the States. (Shows such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *Ivanhoe* dealt with traditional American views of England: knights, castles, feudal lords, and the like.) By 1960, British television began producing its own programs that equaled, and sometimes surpassed, American fare.

Britain's first major homegrown commercial hit was Granada TV's *Coronation Street,* a soap opera which debuted in 1960. Instead of dealing with beautiful rich people, as traditional American soapers did, the program centered on the exploits of just plain folk in the working class city of Manchester, the sort that might be found in America in *The Honeymooners.* Gleason's show was an exception, though, to the general American view of TV heroes. In Britain, *Coronation Street* quickly became the top-rated show and working class settings became commonplace in other series.

One and one-half years later, the BBC (aiming to meet its commercial competition head-on) presented a sitcom take on the world of *Coronation Street, Steptoe and Son,* starring Wilfrid Brambell (later cast as Paul McCartney's grandfather in the Beatles' film "A Hard Day's Night") and Harry Corbett. The two portrayed Albert and Harold Steptoe, father and son junk dealers who were forever squabbling over money and the future. As the elder Steptoe, Brambell played to perfection the garrulous and possessive aging father determined to prevent his son from leaving the homestead; he often resorted to underhanded tricks to break up Harold's budding romances or inclinations to venture into a new business on his own. He always succeeded as Harold inevitably decided to remain in the junk business, at home, with his dad, despite the constant interference. The vibrancy of Brambell and Corbett in their characters, as well as the unique nature of the setting, quickly caught on with the British public and by late 1963 *Steptoe and Son* replaced *Coronation Street* for a while as the country's most popular program. It was one of the first important British programs to catch an American network's attention and NBC showed a few *Steptoe and Son* clips on *The Jack Paar Show* in April 1964, while subcontracting with Embassy Pictures to produce a pilot for an American version of the show. The pilot, however, was rejected and plans for the series were eventually shelved. Even adapted for American tastes, the "life among the lowly" concept did not seem quite right for Stateside audiences weaned on solid middle-class heroes.

British television's first major success in the American market was with its own particular brand of spy adventures, a field that had been remarkably unsuccessful in the U.S. Throughout the 1950s, American producers had insisted on presenting stereotyped cold war clashes between square-jawed Americans upholding democracy and Communist forces made up of unbelievably stupid agents with heavy foreign accents, in such vehicles as *I Led Three Lives* (starring Richard Carlson), *Biff Baker, USA* (starring Alan Hale, Jr.), and *The Hunter* (starring Barry Nelson). None of these were very successful and the networks were convinced that spy shows just did not sell. Ironically, James Bond, the smooth, sophisticated spy whose adventure novels launched the British passion for international intrigue, was nearly made into an American television series several times during the decade.

In 1954, shortly after the publication of the first James Bond novel, *Casino Royale,* CBS paid author Ian Fleming $1,000 for the rights to do a special one-hour live TV drama production of the story. The network cast veteran TV spy Barry Nelson as agent-playboy James Bond (a role almost identical to Nelson's U.S. agent/playboy character from the old *Hunter* series) and Peter Lorre as Le Chiffre (a ruthless Soviet operative) and on October 21, 1954, presented the adaptation on its *Climax* anthology series. CBS was not interested in any further adventures, so Fleming sold the theatrical film rights to that story and turned out two more novels. The next year, working with NBC producer Henry Mor-

November 18, 1963
Prior to their U.S. pop success, The Beatles are the subject of a pair of light network news feature reports about British Beatlemania, starting with a piece from NBC correspondent Edwin Newman for that night's *Huntley-Brinkley Report.* Four days later (November 22), on *The CBS Morning News,* London bureau chief Alexander Kendrick offers his take, but his story does not reach Walter Cronkite's *CBS Evening News* until December 10.

November 23, 1963
Doctor Who. (BBC). The premiere of a serialized science fiction adventure series about a mysterious "Doctor" (William Hartnell), who flies through time and space in what looks like a big blue phone booth. Although the program becomes a British hit by its second story arc (which introduces the villainous, robotic Daleks), it does not catch on in the U.S. until the late 1970s via public television, with Tom Baker in the lead role.

December 30, 1963
Let's Make a Deal. (NBC). Monty Hall begins exploiting basic human greed every weekday afternoon.

January 21, 1964
Ed Murrow resigns as director of the U.S. Information Agency due to poor health.

March 2, 1964
Fred Friendly replaces Dick Salant as president of CBS News. Salant moves to a more amorphous position, CBS vice president for corporate affairs.

March 25, 1964
Live trans-Pacific television begins, via the *Relay II* satellite.

April 30, 1964
UHF Day. From this point on, all new television sets must be capable of receiving channels 14 through 83.

August 13, 1964
CBS buys the New York Yankees.

September 11, 1964
After twenty years, boxing vanishes from weekly network television as ABC's *Fight of the Week* expires in Cleveland. Don Dunphy calls the last fight: Dick Tiger beats Don Fullmer in ten rounds.

ganthau III, he began writing a new half-hour TV adventure series to be filmed on location in Jamaica, *Commander Jamaica*. James Bond served as a model for the main character in the pilot script, but the project fell through so Fleming used the script as a basis for the next book in the Bond series, *Dr. No,* instead. Several years later, in 1958, CBS decided to try a TV series featuring the actual Bond character (titled, appropriately, *James Bond, Secret Agent*), and Fleming wrote plot outlines for six episodes. Once again, the planned series was shelved, so he adapted three of the TV treatments for his anthology of James Bond short stories, *For Your Eyes Only,* and concentrated his energies on using the character as the basis for a series of theatrical films. (The *Casino Royale* film project had never materialized.) Fleming at last succeeded in selling the options to his remaining Bond novels in 1961 to producers Harry Saltzman and Albert Broccoli who, in turn, convinced United Artists to finance the project, and in 1962 the first James Bond film, "Dr. No," appeared. It earned over $1 million in Britain alone and the 1963 followup, "From Russia With Love," was released at the height of the spy craze in Britain, and became a major box office success in the U.S.

British television had begun to cash in on the increasing interest in spies and international espionage at the turn of the decade, and each of its three major spy programs (*Danger Man, The Saint, The Avengers*) eventually made it to American television. In September 1960, ATV, a British commercial network, produced its own version of James Bond, secret agent John Drake (Patrick McGoohan) in *Danger Man.* Unlike America's old spy vehicles, the series showed the enemies of democracy as intelligent equals to the government's agents, and their elaborate plans of subversion unfolded in well-written, engrossing adventures. (Specific politics were, of course, downplayed.) McGoohan's punchy independent persona gave the show an extra lift that attracted American attention and CBS picked it up for a brief run in the summer of 1961, when it attracted critical acclaim but few viewers.

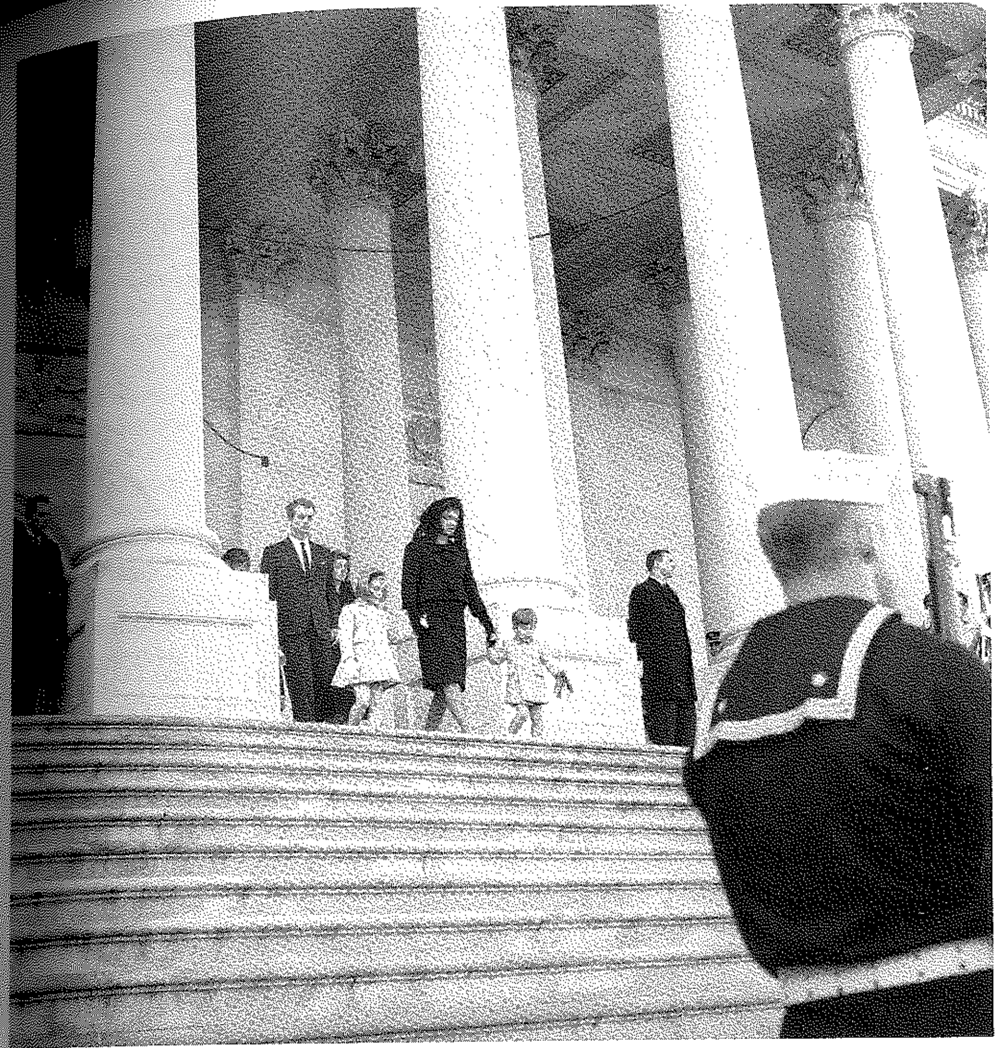
One year later, another series featuring global intrigue began in Britain, Leslie Charteris's *The Saint,* starring Roger Moore as Simon Templar. Templar was presented as a handsome, wealthy, sophisticated playboy in the Bond mold, but the program was really quite bland. The villains were usually involved in moderately elaborate but routine crimes and, very often, Templar emerged as nothing more than a vintage private eye updated for the 1960s. Nonetheless, Moore was already a familiar figure to American audiences from his stint in several Warner Bros. action-adventure series and *The Saint* was picked up for the American market rather quickly: first through syndication to individual stations in 1963 and, four years later, by NBC for a network run. The more traditional approach of the program made it much more attractive to American programmers interested in exploiting the spy craze with a fairly safe product. A more unconventional British spy series, *The Avengers,* had to wait until 1966 for its extraordinary style and premise to reach American viewers.

The Avengers began in January 1961 as a moderately straightforward spy show featuring Patrick Macnee and Ian Hendry as dilettante men-about-town involved in solving crimes and avenging evil. In October 1962, the premise was revamped and the show began displaying a distinctively different tone that turned it into a British cult favorite with a small but rapidly growing legion of fans. Macnee was identified as government agent John Steed and joined in his adventures by Mrs. Catherine Gale, a widow (played by Honor Blackman). The two were thrust into complicated plots hatched by peculiar villains and the series began adopting a subtle, tongue-in-cheek approach that produced bizarre yet intriguing stories. Not only were the cases highly unusual, but the relationship between Steed and Mrs. Gale was completely unheard of. They operated as a team and she was his equal in every way. They both defended themselves with skill and finesse, never losing their British cool and sly smiles even in the most dire situations, and neither was dependent on the other for constant rescue. What's more, the romantic connection between the two was kept deliciously unclear; there were hints of *amour* but the viewer was left to decide whether there was, in fact, a liaison or not.

Only a few months after *The Avengers* shifted to its more offbeat style, full-bodied satire came to the BBC with *That Was The Week That Was.* Premiering in December 1962, *TW3* (as it was known) marked a major step forward in British broadcasting because it was the first show to poke fun at, and actually ridicule, well-known politicians and office holders. A stock company of players, hosted by David Frost and featuring singer Millicent Martin, performed generally irreverent skits to press their points, occasionally even indulging in shock tactics (such as name calling) to catch viewers' attention. The writers based the words and music of the show on the events of the previous week, giving *TW3* a feeling of immediacy akin to a cabaret comedy ensemble. The program was biting, controversial, very funny, and alternately admired and resented by viewers, depending on who was the latest target of abuse. Nonetheless, while a shock to Britain, such satire seemed unthinkable for American television. If any series was unlikely to appear in the United States, *That Was The Week That Was* was it. Yet on Sunday, November 10, 1963, NBC presented a one-hour special-pilot for an American version of *TW3.* Obviously, something had changed.

The mood of the country had grown less somber and less paranoid since 1960. The new spirit was due partly to the reduction in cold war tensions and also to the youth and humor of the Kennedy administration. People simply felt more like laughing. In this atmosphere, NBC decided to take a chance on satire in America. Produced by Leland Hayward and hosted by Henry Fonda, the pilot for *TW3* was not as flip or as rough as its British cousin, but it presented some of the freshest, funniest material to hit U.S. TV in years. The guests on the special were traditional humorists including Mike Nichols and Elaine May, Henry Morgan, and Charly Manna, but their humor was much more topical than usual. In one hour they directed barbs at President Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater, Nelson Rockefeller, crime leaders, dirty books, funeral costs, and left-wing folk songs. The reaction was so strong and positive that NBC called for immediate production of the series, which it had originally considered as a possible new entry in the fall of 1964. Instead, the network planned on a premiere in January. All that remained was to convince skeptical sponsors that the public was ready for such humor. Then something happened.

CBS was in the midst of *As the World Turns* on Friday afternoon, November 22, when Walter Cronkite broke in to announce that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. Within a few minutes, all three networks suspended regular programming and began what became four days of noncommercial television (at a loss of $40 million in advertising revenue). By presenting, live, all the far-flung events of that weekend at a moment's notice, television news proved itself truly deserving of both serious attention and popular acclaim. People throughout the country looked to television for news of the tragedy. They saw the official announcement that Kennedy was dead, as well as the first appearance of the new president, Lyndon Johnson. They followed the return to Washington and the formal ceremonies of the state funeral. Many newsmen on each network distinguished themselves throughout the long hours on the air and several new faces became instant "news celebrities."



Television brought the funeral ceremonies for President Kennedy from Washington to the nation's living rooms. Jacqueline Kennedy *(center)* with daughter Caroline and son John. *(National Archives White House Photo by Abbie Rowe)*

On CBS, Dan Rather, who scooped all others in reporting Kennedy's death, became unofficial anchor of the Dallas reports, while Roger Mudd and Harry Reasoner, two veteran network reporters who had worked largely unnoticed for years, came to the forefront with their handling of the events in Washington. On ABC, Howard K. Smith returned from oblivion and teamed up with a new addition to the ABC news staff, Edward P. Morgan. They were so effective together that they became the regular ABC anchor team for the political specials of 1964. Through it all, television treated the events of the Kennedy assassination with a dignity and style many had thought impossible. For the first time, people throughout the country began to appreciate how much television really meant to them and just what it was capable of.

Even well-known critics such as former FCC chairman Newton Minow marveled, "Only through television could the whole country grasp the tragedy, and at the same time the strength of the democratic process that passed the administration from one president to another within two hours. Television's treatment was sensitive, mature, and dignified. We always hear that television is a young medium. If so, it grew up in a couple of days."

More than any other event to that point, the Kennedy assassination cemented television's role as national information source and national unifier.

As disturbing as the assassination was, television faced an even more unsettling event two days after the president had been shot, as the medium immediately discovered the dangers and conflicts of its increased stature. Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin, was to be transferred from one jail to another on Sunday morning, November 24, and the press, especially television, demanded to witness the event. It was no longer sufficient to merely report that something had happened, the activity had to take place before the cameras. Dallas police complied with the request by making their plans public so that reporters, or anyone, could see Oswald leave the city jail. At 11:20 A.M., at the end of a memorial service for Kennedy in Washington, NBC cut live to Dallas just in time to show the first real-life murder on television as it occurred: A man in a dark suit and hat came out of the crowd, there was a pop, and Oswald dropped from sight, fatally shot. CBS and ABC both just missed also telecasting the event live, but a new device developed for TV sports coverage allowed all three to show the murder again and again with the added impact of slow motion video tape replay.

In demanding access to Oswald, a man who had become an instant media figure, television had focused attention and publicity on what should have been a routine procedure, the prison transfer. Unknowingly, television and television news had crossed a line into a new situation in which it would become increasingly difficult to view the medium as just another reporter. Television was beginning to affect the course of events, transforming seemingly inconsequential actions into important moments in history merely by its presence.

1964–65 SEASON

24. The Unloved Messenger

TELEVISION BECAME THE OBJECT of increasing vilification throughout 1964 for both its entertainment and news programming. The more effective and complete coverage of developing issues and special events by the network news departments upset people of every ideology. They resented the growing encroachment by TV news upon their personal lives and beliefs as well as the unsettling nature of the news itself, often equating the bearer of bad tidings with the disturbing events it reported. At the same time, a move to pure escapism in entertainment programming triggered by the huge success of CBS's rural-based comedy line-up offended the sensibilities of many viewers who found the tube pandering more and more to the lowest common denominator. In contrast to the fondly remembered high drama of TV's golden days, the networks' fall schedules offered country bumpkins, ridiculous settings, childish plots, witches, Martians, and pure soap opera. It all seemed deliberately designed to appeal to viewers who looked at television as a mindless escape tool. Critics pointed to the continuing number one status of *The Beverly Hillbillies* as irrefutable evidence that quality television had fallen on hard times.

The Beverly Hillbillies never deserved all the public defilement it received, but the program was a symbol of the direction television entertainment had taken under the guidance of CBS president James Aubrey. His rural comedy philosophy had kept CBS number one in the ratings and it cleared the path for a host of inferior successors launched by all three networks, with CBS leading the way. Most of the new programs lacked the comic energy of the hillbilly original and were responsible for generally humorless TV. As parent to the trend, though, *The Beverly Hillbillies* received its share of the blame for the sins of its offspring. Even though imitations of successful formats were expected as a normal part of the industry, the blatant, almost incestuous, development of the new sitcom spinoff shows struck many as going too far.

Spinoffs had been an accepted practice in broadcasting for decades, especially in the field of variety. Popular personalities such as Phil Harris and Dennis Day (from *The Jack Benny Program),* Julius La Rosa and Pat Boone (from Arthur Godfrey's shows), and Gisele MacKenzie (from *Your Hit Parade)* had all been promoted from second string status to programs of their own because their association with an established hit gave them an instant advantage over the competition. Situation comedies had certainly followed program trends in the past (wacky housewives, talking animals, showbiz widowers) but in courting the rural themes television developed a very systematic approach to the spin-off process. A specific character or gimmick from a successful sitcom was carefully eased into a new setting and show, as close to the original as possible. Sometimes there were even crossover cast appearances from the established hit. Unfortunately, many of the new series failed to develop past the surface gimmicks and did not deliver the strong secondary characters and good scripts necessary for support. Yet with the momentum provided by familiar hooks and faces, simple-minded escapist fare prospered.

Beverly Hillbillies producer Paul Henning had started the cloning process in the 1963–64 season with *Petticoat Junction,* which presented the adventures of the folks "back in the hills." Henning took veteran character actor Bea Benaderet, who played cousin Pearl Bodine, Jethro's widowed mother (a minor role in *The Beverly Hillbillies),* rechristened her Kate Bradley (also a widow), and put her in charge of the Shady Rest Hotel in the mythical backwoods town of Hooterville. Though *Petticoat Junction* had the outward trappings of *The Beverly Hillbillies,* there were no creative crazies or charged conflicts in it. The setting was much too restrictive. Gone was the incongruity of the progenitor between rich and poor, socialite and hillbilly. Hooterville was a one-horse town. Even occasional invasions by city slickers such as Homer Bedloe (Charles Lane as a railroad executive determined to scrap the town's ancient train, the *Cannonball*) were doomed from the start. The aseptic peace of 1950s TV had been transported to the hills and nothing could disturb it. Worst of all, the characters were far too bland to be funny. While Benaderet was usually an excellent supporting character (in roles such as Blanche Morton, the crazy neighbor to George Burns and Gracie Allen), her warm mother figure of Kate Bradley was not credible either as a comic center or cagey manipulator. Her three daughters were as interchangeable as their names: Billie Jo, Bobbie Jo, and Betty Jo. Gravelly voiced Edgar Buchanan tried his best in the role of a scheming moneymaker, Joe Carson (the hotel's self-proclaimed manager), but Uncle Joe's ventures usually produced little more than a few jokes about him being a scheming loafer. In short, the series was harmless fluff, not at all offensive, but not very funny either. It was pure escapism, a sort of "chewing gum for the eyes and mind," not only far removed from the everyday grim reality of the big city, but also a world apart from rural reality as well.

Nonetheless, the hillbilly connection worked and *Petticoat Junction* was an instant hit. Its premiere episode came in as the number five show of the week. Hooterville was undeniably popular and the program lasted seven seasons. In 1965, the show spawned its own calculated clone, *Green Acres.* For that series, Henning took the spinoff formula one step further by keeping the same setting (Hooterville), using many of the same characters (there were frequent crossovers with *Petticoat Junction),* and introducing a premise that was a mirror image of *The Beverly Hillbillies:* two city slickers (Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor) moved to the country. That incongruity brought the series much closer to *The Beverly Hillbillies* in quality and, once again, home viewers were entranced as *Green Acres* clucked on for six years.

Following the success of *Petticoat Junction* in the 1963–64 season, CBS turned to another popular series, *The Andy Griffith Show,* for a spinoff in the fall of 1964, *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.* The Gomer Pyle character of a halfwit gas station attendant (played by Jim Nabors) was drafted by Uncle Aubrey, taken from Mayberry, North Carolina, and placed in a Marine base in California. There, under the tutelage of the often infuriated Sergeant Vincent Carter (Frank Sutton), the simple country rube repeatedly exasperated yet outwitted the military minds. The setting and premise were nearly identical to Andy Griffith's first major vehicle, "No Time for Sergeants," in 1955. To complete the circle (and to make certain the spinoff was properly launched) Andy accompanied Gomer from Mayberry, taking him into his new setting, and keeping a watchful eye on him throughout the first episode. Gomer clicked and the series stood as further proof that spinoffs from established hits were a valuable tool that, if handled properly, could produce another equally potent program. Gomer's success was especially impressive because the show not only outscored the direct competition of veteran Jack Benny (who had moved to NBC that year following a contract dispute) but also easily outperformed the very same premise on ABC. As a very familiar character, Gomer stood out among the fall premieres and found it much easier to gain a toehold and build an audience than did the unknowns (Sammy Jackson and Harry Hickox) of the ABC version, which even took the *No Time for Sergeants* title. The country took Gomer to heart in his new job, making Nabors a star in his own right as the series remained in the top ten through the 1960s. Gomer's wide-eyed innocence also presented a reassuring view of the military in an era when people were beginning to become aware of the presence of real Marines in a real war. Gomer Pyle was always the all-American country boy.

Some critics, however, found the character to be the personification of everything objectionable about the rural slant being pursued by CBS. Gomer was a naive country bumpkin who obviously read and enjoyed nothing more challenging than *Captain Marvel* comic books (as his cry of "Shazam!" indicated), yet he was one of television's new heroes. His character might have been acceptable as a second banana but as a lead his effusive manner and familiar expressions such as "Sur-*prise!* Sur-*prise!* Sur-*prise!*" and "Gaul-lee Sergeant Carter!" were particularly discordant and grating to some. Nonetheless, the program was well done and often funny, and such reactions more likely reflected deep resentment at the near total domination by escapist fare in entertainment programming. The style seemed as pervasive as Westerns and quizzes had been at their saturation points, but it looked as if the spinoff potential and continued high ratings earned by the silly gimmicks and simpleton heroes would assure them spots in the network schedules for years. While some viewers were upset, most people clearly enjoyed the programs. They were light, uncomplicated, and a welcome haven from bad news.

Just as action-adventure shows in the late 1950s had given the networks Westerns that were not Westerns, the escapist sitcoms quickly expanded beyond strictly rural settings. Though not direct spinoffs from any established hit, the premises of these new shows were just as unlikely as millionaire hillbillies and included such hooks as Martians, monsters, and witches. Of these, the program that showcased Aubrey escapism at its worst was *Gilligan's Island,* which followed the adventures of the passengers and crew of a sight-seeing charter boat that was shipwrecked on an uncharted South Pacific island. The show literally went to the ends of the earth to avoid reality in a premise that seemed to overwhelm the writers with its limitations. Though the castaways were confined to a tiny island and could never be rescued (or the show was over), someone from the outside world was always finding the way to their doorstep, then departing without them after going through the same sort of obvious jokes and misunderstandings. It was like repeating one skit from a comedy variety show over and over and over again. Yet even with this strained set-up and repetitious scripts, the cast might have been able to overcome these limitations by developing a sharp comic sense in each of their characters. Instead, most just settled into the plastic caricatures they had been given: the hard working skipper (Alan Hale, Jr.), his well-meaning but bumbling first mate (Bob Denver), a dumb but beautiful movie star (Tina Louise), a pretty homespun Midwestern girl (Dawn Wells), a brilliant research professor (Russell Johnson), a multimillionaire (Jim Backus) and his pampered wife (Natalie Schafer). Hale, Backus, and Denver made valiant attempts to bring life to their roles, but even they usually fell short. Denver brought the spacey, naive innocence of his Maynard G. Krebs character to first mate Gilligan, but what had worked well in a supporting role to Dobie Gillis could not carry an entire series. He was just another lost child on the island. Backus and Hale flashed moments of wit, but it was a losing battle. Overall, the show resembled nothing so much as a kiddie cartoon and it seemed designed to capture the interest of young children by presenting cardboard adults who acted like children in grownup bodies. This strategy attracted a fair size audience and allowed the program to survive for three seasons, though it rarely elicited more than an audible groan from most of the nation's adults.

Other new gimmicks might have appeared as silly as *Gilligan's Island* on the surface, but the better ones kept a tighter rein on the initial premise. Rather than building a sweeping but all-too-limiting setting that could prematurely strangle the series, other producers settled for a slight wrinkle to reality that could be continuously exploited. In this vein, a Martian and a witch were incorporated into moderately normal situations and acceptable, if not outstanding, TV fare resulted. Both *My Favorite Martian* (starring Ray Walston as a Martian shipwrecked on Earth) and *Bewitched* (Elizabeth Montgomery as a suburban housewife who happened to be a witch) used their zany hooks primarily as an excuse to display entertaining visual tricks in that week's situation. Once the complications were introduced, the actors and scripts, not the gimmicks, carried the episodes.

Still, a totally bizarre setting could succeed as long as it stuck to the basics of comedy. If the characters and atmosphere on *Gilligan's Island* had been developed beyond dull caricature and cheap tropical sets, the program might have been able to transcend its limitations. ABC proved it could be done that season with the hilarious adventures of an entire family that came directly out of the world of late night creature features, *The Addams Family* (based on the characters created by cartoonist Charles Addams). Though the plots for the series were usually just adequate, the characters and setting were devilishly sharp. Gomez (John Astin) and his wife Morticia (Carolyn Jones) headed the freaky family that lived in an appropriately spooky old family mansion just outside of town. Rather than limiting the program to predictable monster jokes or half-hearted attempts to make the characters appear a

FALL 1964 SCHEDULE

Day	Network	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
MON	ABC	local	VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA		NO TIME FOR SERGEANTS	WENDY AND ME	BING CROSBY SHOW	Ben Casey	
	CBS	local	To Tell The Truth	I've Got A Secret	Andy Griffith Show	The Lucy Show	MANY HAPPY RETURNS	SLATTERY'S PEOPLE	
	NBC	local	90 BRISTOL COURT (KAREN; HARRIS AGAINST THE WORLD; TOM, DICK AND MARY)			Andy Williams Show # JONATHAN WINTERS SHOW		Alfred Hitchcock Hour	
TUE	ABC	local	Combat!		McHale's Navy	TYCOON	PEYTON PLACE	The Fugitive	
	CBS	local		WORLD WAR ONE	Red Skelton Hour		Petticoat Junction	The Doctors And The Nurses	
	NBC	local	Mr. Novak		THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.		That Was The Week That Was	Bell Telephone Hour NBC News Specials	
WED	ABC	local	Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet	Patty Duke Show	SHINDIG	MICKEY	Burke's Law		ABC Scope
	CBS	local	CBS Reports CBS News Specials		The Beverly Hillbillies	Dick Van Dyke Show	CARA WILLIAMS SHOW	Danny Kaye Show	
	NBC	local	The Virginian			NBC Wednesday Night At The Movies			
THR	ABC	local	The Flintstones	Donna Reed Show	My Three Sons	BEWITCHED	PEYTON PLACE	Jimmy Dean Show	
	CBS	local	THE MUNSTERS	Perry Mason		Password	THE BAILEYS OF BALBOA	The Defenders	
	NBC	local	DANIEL BOONE		Dr. Kildare		Hazel	Kraft Suspense Theater # Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall	
FRI	ABC	local	JONNY QUEST	The Farmer's Daughter	THE ADDAMS FAMILY	VALENTINE'S DAY	TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH		local
	CBS	local	Rawhide		THE ENTERTAINERS		GOMER PYLE, U.S.M.C.	THE REPORTER	
	NBC	local	International Showtime		Bob Hope Presents The Chrysler Theater # Bob Hope Show		Jack Benny Program	Jack Paar Show	
SAT	ABC	local	The Outer Limits		Lawrence Welk Show		Hollywood Palace		local
	CBS	local	Jackie Gleason Show		GILLIGAN'S ISLAND	MR. BROADWAY		Gunsmoke	
	NBC	local	FLIPPER	FAMOUS ADVENTURES OF MR. MAGOO	KENTUCKY JONES	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies			
SUN	ABC	local	Wagon Train		BROADSIDE	The ABC Sunday Night Movie			
	CBS	Lassie	My Favorite Martian	Ed Sullivan Show		MY LIVING DOLL	Joey Bishop Show	Candid Camera	What's My Line
	NBC	PROFILES IN COURAGE (from 6:30)	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		Bill Dana Show	Bonanza		THE ROGUES	

normal part of society (in spite of their background), the producers accepted the members of the family for what they were and stretched the premise to the limit. The Addams family were ghoulish eccentrics and proud of it. They flaunted their behavior in characters that were bristling with energy. Morticia and Gomez cultivated man-eating plants, stayed in on sunny days, and reveled in hurricane winds. To relax, family members enjoyed stretching each other out on the basement rack and, at play, the children experimented with dynamite. The household also included live-in relations Uncle Fester (Jackie Coogan), Grandmamma Addams (Blossom Rock), and cousin Itt (a four-foot-tall ball of hair), as well as the ultra basso butler, Lurch (Ted Cassidy), and the ultimate right hand helper, Thing. For all of them, the question of conforming to normal society never came up; the most important task was maintaining family traditions and an awareness of the Addams family roots, which stretched back hundreds of years. They were aristocrats with highly unusual tastes and no doubts about their proper station in life. Gomez and Morticia were passionate, but proper, and their strict adherence to traditional upper class role models resulted in a marvelous caricature of the aristocratic lifestyle. Ever the ardent lover (just a word of French by Morticia sent him into an uncontrolled fury), Gomez often found himself frustrated by his wife's insistence on abiding by the rules of public decorum ("not now dear; it wouldn't be right"). They were ghoulish in their preferences, but always socially correct.

Such a rich collection of characters, added to the colorful household accouterments, gave the program a comic verve which was even more striking when contrasted with the mundane monster fare of CBS's family of freaks, *The Munsters.* Unlike the Addams household, the Munster family looked like classic horror film creatures: Fred Gwynne played a Frankenstein father; Yvonne De Carlo, the vampire mother; and Al Lewis, Count Dracula. Unfortunately, the attempts at humor in the show never rose above the physical incongruity of the Munsters as they tried to act like an average, if somewhat odd, middle-class family. Once the "shock value" of a collection of monsters had worn off, the routine nature of the scripts became painfully evident. Visitors from the outside world would leave the Addams home in a terrified daze; intruders in the Munster mansion merely faced grownups in Halloween costumes. Both series lasted only two seasons, but *The Addams Family* brought a touch of class to escapist television.

Escapism was certainly not limited to situation comedy or new to television under Aubrey, but rarely had the networks pursued the concept with such a vengeance. TV critics, upset at the trend to rural settings and mindless heroes, were positively aghast at the move by ABC to bring daytime soap opera, intact, to prime time. Television's cultural slide seemed undeniable and complete in the fall of 1964 with the premiere of *Peyton Place.*

Actually, pseudo-soap operas had been appearing in prime time for years in the guise of drama anthologies *(Lux Video Theater),* situation comedies *(Ozzie and Harriet),* epic Westerns *(Bonanza* and *Wagon Train),* and career dramas *(Dr. Kildare* and *Ben Casey),* so much of the disgust was in reaction to the term "soap opera" itself. The networks had found that the label carried a certain stigma that turned off large segments of viewers, so they generally kept the soapy aspects of their prime time programs discretely in the background and adhered to an unwritten rule limiting blatant soap operas to the afternoon "housewife" hours. ABC's move marked a major break from this policy. *Peyton Place* was a regular soaper following characters through a continuing story line, rather than the usual self-contained episodes of other prime time series. The program brazenly displayed the sudsy staples of life, love, and scandal.

For the number three network, the soap opera strategy made a great deal of sense. After all, CBS had made a fortune in daytime TV with such long running classics as *Love of Life, As the World Turns, Search for Tomorrow,* and *The Guiding Light,* and ABC saw no reason to limit its assault on the field to the daytime. Potential ratings points were just sitting there and, if *Peyton Place* caught on, the network would have two hit shows at once because the series was on twice each week. ABC boldly ballyhooed the show as a novel for television (it was based on a successful book as well as a movie), ignored the cries of anguish from outraged critics, and launched the series with high hopes. It was a smash, though its individual success didn't alter the bias against soaps. *Peyton Place* was the exception that gave soap opera fans a chance for an evening dose of bathos.

The program was a classic soaper with the usual conflicts stemming from guilt associated with extramarital and premarital sex. Though such themes were bold and titillating for prime time, they were familiar stuff to afternoon viewers who studied the cast and conflicts in the New England town of Peyton Place and nodded their approval. Constance MacKenzie (Dorothy Malone) feared the devastating humiliation she felt would occur if anyone discovered her dark secret: Eighteen years before she had "made a terrible mistake" and, nine months later, given birth to an illegitimate child, Allison MacKenzie (Mia Farrow). Now, Dr. Rossi (Ed Nelson), who had delivered the baby (and who probably knew "the secret"), was in love with Constance while Rodney Harrington (Ryan O'Neal) was in love with Allison (only he probably *did not* know "the secret"). There was much, much more and the story continued with ripening teenagers, broken marriages, adultery, more illegitimate kids (the *ne plus ultra* development in soap opera scripts), and an endless string of coincidences.

In its first season, *Peyton Place* often landed in the top ten, and in the summer of 1965 ABC launched a third night, which lasted through the following summer. At the same time, CBS gave *Our Private World,* an off shoot of *As the World Turns,* a twice-each-week prime time tryout, but this ran only for one summer. In the fall of 1965, NBC converted *Dr. Kildare* into a twice-each-week serial, recognizing that the program easily matched the sudsiest of daytime soaps. After one year in this guise, *Kildare* also disappeared. Obviously, *Peyton Place* was a one-of-a-kind hit, at least for the moment. TV viewers were apparently unwilling to devote themselves to several prime time soaps simultaneously, though they followed *Peyton Place* for nearly five years.

A much more imaginative form of escapist entertainment was the spy craze, led by the phenomenally successful James Bond films and books. Americans had been a bit slower than the British in embracing such larger-than-life international adventures, but by 1964 they, too, were hooked and the networks responded with a parade of Bond-like TV spies. Spies had never been handled very well by American television and the task of bringing the delicate balance of refined wit, cruel violence, desirable women, expensive gimmicks, and occasional self-parody to television seemed especially difficult. NBC was the first to jump on the bandwagon, enlisting James Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, for a very Bond-ish proposed TV spy series, originally titled *Mr. Solo.* Fleming had to drop out of the project due to ill health, but the show made it to the air in the fall of 1964 as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*

Though obviously working with a substantially smaller budget than the multimillion-dollar Bond film epics, the series was a very good television equivalent, comfortably adopting many of the most attractive Bond gimmicks. The *U*nited *N*etwork *C*ommand for *L*aw and *E*nforcement was a powerful CIA-type organization headquartered in the bowels of New York City, with a secret entrance hidden at the innocent-looking Del Floria's tailor shop (behind the fake wall of a changing room). U.N.C.L.E. deployed a world-wide network of agents and an arsenal of elaborate gadgets, specially designed guns, and exotic electronic gear including miniature communicators, tiny listening devices, and coded identification badges. Concerns over world domination, the balance of power, and freedom were bandied about, but this was a cosmetic device to give the scripts a topical flavor for what amounted to a weekly battle between good and evil. Just as Bond's British secret service squared off against SPECTRE, U.N.C.L.E. faced the highly skilled forces of Thrush. (Its acronym was never revealed in the series, but an authorized tie-in paperback novel, *The Dagger Affair,* revealed it as the *T*echnological *H*ierarchy for the *R*emoval of *U*ndesirables and the *S*ubjugation of *H*umanity). The two organizations were engaged in a never-ending struggle that appeared more like a high-powered chess game between two superpowers than a fight for world domination. Particular schemes assumed important propaganda value and served as arenas for a perverse, sportsmanlike competition between the best agents from both sides.

Napoleon Solo (played by Robert Vaughn) was U.N.C.L.E.'s top agent. Like Bond, he was a company man who flaunted the rules of discipline to pursue his own pleasures, placing more trust in his instincts than in standard operating procedures. Solo was a highly refined, highly educated boy-next-door type who fell somewhere in between the aristocratic aloofness of Sherlock Holmes and the gritty earthiness of Sam Spade. He was an excellent Bond surrogate who always got the job done for agency head Alexander Waverly (Leo G. Carroll).

The chief difference between the man from U.N.C.L.E. and James Bond was that Bond operated solo but Solo had a partner. At first, Illya Kuryakin (David McCallum) was little more than a right-hand flunky to Solo. (He was featured for all of five seconds in the pilot episode for the series.) In February, however, McCallum was sent on a promotional tour of eight major cities with low *U.N.C.L.E.* ratings, during which he earned the right to become an equal partner to Solo. Not only did the ratings go up in the cities he visited, but to the surprise (and delight) of the producers, it became obvious by the enthusiastic response of female fans that the Kuryakin character had become a teen heart-throb. From then on, McCallum's sensitive, intellectual, continental allure was used as an excellent complement to Vaughn's middle-American goodness.

In contrast to the James Bond films, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* downplayed cynical sadism and violence in favor of a stronger emphasis on tongue-in-cheek humor and character interaction. An innocent bystander (usually a beautiful woman) was always introduced to the plot to bring the high-level conflict down to a less abstruse level. If the future of mankind did not mean anything to viewers, then a damsel in distress certainly did. More important, with the increased visibility of Kuryakin, the men from U.N.C.L.E.

The arrival of U.S. marines in Vietnam in March 1965 brought about an increase in TV coverage of the war. *(U.S. Army)*

developed a natural repartee, very much in the style of John Steed and Kathy Gale in Britain's *The Avengers*. Because the world of international intrigue all too often involved plots that threatened "the fate of the entire Western world," such an approach was vital to prevent overkill and made the weekly life-and-death perils much easier to take. Though occasionally the program went overboard and turned the entire episode into one long joke (as in the "My Friend, the Gorilla Affair"), when kept in check the lighter touch lifted *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* far above the level of mundane TV melodrama into a first class escapist spy adventure.

ABC and CBS did not get their spy programs out until the next season, though in April CBS, perhaps spurred by *U.N.C.L.E.*'s mid-season surge, brought back the British spy series, *Danger Man*, under a new title, *Secret Agent* (featuring a catchy new theme song by Johnny Rivers). The new hour-long version of the program had begun in Britain in October with Patrick McGoohan still in his role of agent John Drake, though he had softened the character a bit to emphasize a wry sense of humor. It proved only slightly less successful than U.N.C.L.E. and confirmed that TV spies were a viable commodity.

One marvelous tongue-in-cheek series somehow lost in this season of escapist fare was *The Rogues*. Produced by Four Star Television, the program was developed as a sophisticated, high quality vehicle for a troupe of veteran performers led by two of the company's star-owners, Charles Boyer and David Niven. (They had also participated in the 1950s drama anthology series, *Four Star Playhouse*, the company's first venture.) Set in London, *The Rogues* presented the complicated schemes and crimes of an international family of con artists, led by Niven (as Alec Fleming), who rotated the lead each week with Boyer (as French cousin, Marcel) and Gig Young (as American cousin, Tony). Occasionally, all three would join forces for exceptionally challenging plots, and they often enlisted the aid of British cousins Timmy (Robert Coote) and grande dame Margaret (Gladys Cooper). Naturally, the Fleming family only chiseled victims that deserved it (bad guys such as a South American dictator played by Telly Savalas), often leaving them embarrassed and humiliated as well as fleeced. Despite rave reviews and a strong lead-in (the number one rated *Bonanza*), the program failed to register high ratings and was dropped by NBC after only one season. To those disgusted by what they saw as the abysmal level of entertainment programming, such a decision was not surprising. *Gilligan's Island* and *Petticoat Junction* lived on, but a witty, sophisticated program was not even given a second chance.

The critical blasts labeling TV's entertainment programming as childish and unimaginative were ironic because, at the same time, the medium was also being lambasted for its aggressive (some said intrusive) approach to the news. In either direction, television faced outraged viewers, though objections to the news were far more serious. Television entertainment was a matter of taste and tastes differed and changed. Television news touched deeply held and long-standing personal beliefs, and it was becoming increasingly apparent that some people would have been pleased to see TV network news completely disappear from their lives.

Resentment of the news had grown out of its increased visibility and the exposure it gave to developing controversial issues. Some of the additional coverage was merely a function of time: Over fifteen years viewers had grown accustomed to fifteen-minute nightly newscasts. In 1963 the programs had doubled in length. The number of bureaus and correspondents had also increased substantially. Resources available for normal coverage of an average news event allowed much more depth and detail than before, so by just following everyday procedures correspondents produced more extensive reports. Though the reporters were not "fighting for" a particular cause, some viewers felt that the additional attention made certain issues seem much more important than ever before.

It was also true, however, that the network news departments had been specifically devoting portions of the additional nightly news time to an examination of social and political issues previously left undiscussed. That was one of the reasons they had fought for the longer news time in the first place: to win the opportunity to deal, at length, with important issues. Viewers did not necessarily want to face some of these issues, though, and many resented what they saw as an intrusion on their lives. There were always countless special interest newspapers and magazines catering to every ideological slant (not everyone had to read the *New York Times*), but if people chose to watch network news at all they had a choice of only three similar programs. Each one tried to present a survey of all the important national news events of the day. The structure of the network news programs made it all but impossible to skip disturbing news items; they came unpredictably into the home before an irked viewer could stop them. Despite the networks' efforts to take an unbiased stance in the reporting, what seemed cool and objective in one region of the country could touch a very sensitive spot in another. It was not like radio either. That had permitted the individual listener to form a picture to fit preconceived notions based merely on sounds and narration. Television, with its increasing emphasis toward "on the spot" news film, brought profoundly disturbing sounds and pictures into the home and these were difficult to ignore. The period of the mid-1960s was one of volatile social change anyway and many people resented being forced to confront so many different issues each night in their own living rooms. More and more, they linked their growing resentment of the changes in the country with television, television news, and the networks. The messengers that had, at first, merely carried the word of a new order soon became interchangeable with it. As in the old story of the king who punished the messenger who brought him bad news, viewers reacted to the alterations in their lives by turning on the tube and attacking it. One of the first events to spark the wave of such negative viewer reaction was the mass protest march on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on August 28, 1963.

The protest was the largest such assembly in Washington since impoverished World War I veterans (dubbed the "bonus marchers") had gathered in 1932. The networks, which had been slowly increasing the amount of their civil rights coverage through the early 1960s, treated the assembly as a major national event, equivalent to a space shot or presidential election. There were special live reports throughout the day, prime time specials, and late night wrapups. The coverage showed more than 200,000 civil rights supporters as peaceful, reasonable people gathered together in support of a righteous cause. Reverend King's impassioned and eloquent "I Have a Dream" speech in favor of civil rights and integration served as the emotional high point to the day and it was carried live to people throughout the nation. Favorable public reaction to the presentation provided a tremendous boost to civil rights legislation before Congress. Legislators began to think that, perhaps, passage of a civil rights bill would not be political suicide. Defenders of segregation, however, saw the changing mood as disastrous and television's participation as unforgivable.

In a three-hour NBC prime time special on civil rights, broadcast five days after King's speech, Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett said that television was to blame for civil disorder in America. By raising the expectations of America's blacks too rapidly, he said, the medium had created the climate that allowed "rabble rousers" such as King to gain power. Though Barnett might have been somewhat biased, having felt the sting of bad TV publicity in his own moves against civil rights activities (his efforts to block the admission of a young black man, James Meredith, to the University of Mississippi in 1962 had received extensive TV coverage), he was by no means alone in his beliefs. In the spring and summer of 1964, Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, in his first run at the presidency, pointed very specifically to the extended civil rights coverage by CBS, NBC, and ABC, as well as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, as "unnecessary." Publicity given to civil rights activities, he contended, not any underlying social injustice, was responsible for the civil rights problem.

On July 18, 1964, the problem of minor disorders resulting from the push for civil rights exploded into a much more dramatic confrontation as the first major inner city race riot in decades erupted in New York City's Harlem. TV crews rushed to the scene and were shocked to discover that both sides hated reporters. Police, sensitive to the possibility of bad publicity for the force, did not welcome the presence of the news crews, but neither did the rioters. To them, television, with its fancy remote trucks and equipment, was just another arm of what they saw as a white power structure, which was ready to distort their viewpoint and the meaning of their actions. Both sides, during the night, beat up reporters. For the remainder of the summer, thoughtful documentaries and discussions filled the airwaves, as people bravely searched for the complex, underlying causes of the problem, but they usually reached the predictable general conclusion that difficult slum living conditions and police brutality had touched off the violence. In this light, "Harlem: Test for a Nation" (on NBC) naively cited two cities as models of how to avoid riots: Detroit and Los Angeles. Detroit had an integrated police force; and the black section of Los Angeles, Watts, did not even look like a slum, it was almost a heavenly suburb. One year later, this "suburb" erupted into violence that totally overshadowed the Harlem riot of 1964. Two years after that, much the same occurred in Detroit.

In the summer of 1965, all three networks picked up dramatic and mildly sensationalist overhead shots of the riot in Watts from a helicamera devised by the crew from an independent Los Angeles station, KTLA (whose grimly appropriate news motto had been: "If hell breaks loose, turn to KTLA!"). Helicopter pilot Hal Fishman provided a blow-by-blow description of the rampaging mobs, audacious looters, burning buildings, and police-civilian confrontations. Thirty-five people died and more than $200 million in property damage took place. At the same time, the news crews were stoned by the mob, equipment was stolen, and a number of $10,000 mobile vans were torched. The beleaguered police displayed little concern for representatives of a medium many felt was glorifying violence with its reporting anyway. In covering Watts, television was once again caught in a no-win situation.

TV conveyed the terror of a volatile situation in a way no other news medium could. The expanded scope of network news had dovetailed almost exactly with the rapidly developing issue of civil rights, in both its peaceful and violent forms. In general, TV failed to satisfy anyone with its coverage. Many people saw it as an all-too-willing forum for anti-establishment figures out to win converts and propagate violence, while many frustrated blacks found it insensitive and ignorant.

With the country reeling from racial tensions and the aftereffects of the Kennedy assassination, it took a great deal of guts for NBC to go ahead with its plans for an American version of the popular British satire program *That Was The Week That Was*. The BBC had, in fact, dropped its version of the program at the end of

September 16, 1964
Shindig. (ABC). Britain's pioneer of television rock'n'roll, Jack Good, shows America how it's done. His fast-paced showcase for rock talent not only features top artists such as The Beatles, but also presents up-and-coming performers such as Billy Preston and Bobby Sherman.

September 19-25, 1964
"NBC Week." Following ABC's lead, NBC puts all of its fall premieres into one easy-to-publicize week. NBC also emphasizes the fact that it is the first network to have more than 50% of its prime time fare in color.

October 5, 1964
90 Bristol Court. (NBC). An experiment in program packaging. NBC presents three standard sitcoms as part of one ninety-minute show. The hook? All the characters in *Karen, Harris Against the World,* and *Tom, Dick, and Mary* live in the same apartment complex: 90 Bristol Court. Only *Karen* survives past January.

October 7, 1964
NBC and Universal Studios present the first two-hour made-for-television movie, "See How They Run," starring John Forsythe and Jane Wyatt. This film—and a few others like it aired this season—receives very little publicity and registers mediocre ratings.

November 8, 1964
Profiles in Courage. (NBC). Robert Saudek, former *Omnibus* guru, presents a series of twenty-six historical dramatizations inspired by John Kennedy's 1956 Pulitzer Prize winning book.

1963 because, it explained, 1964 was to be an election year in Britain and it would not be right for the BBC to make fun of politicians. Despite the fact that the U.S. also faced elections that year, NBC did not follow suit and instead set about convincing both Madison Avenue and the American public that topical, political humor could be entertaining and profitable.

One fortunate result of the cancellation of the British *TW3* was that it allowed David Frost to join the American version when it premiered in January 1964 (though at first he remained in the background as just another member of the *TW3* family). Elliott Reid originally acted as the host and he was joined by Frost, Henry Morgan, Phyllis Newman, Buck Henry, puppeteer Burr Tillstrom, and Nancy Ames (the singing "TW3 Girl"). At first, the writers were unsure of their ground (satire was certainly new to American television) and settled for standard TV jokes with topical names plugged in. By the late spring, they began to find their mark and the show picked up noticeably in both pacing and overall quality. The writers developed satirical approaches to topical issues and events while also poking fun at television itself, especially its commercials. Variety shows had been doing sendups of overplayed, all-too-familiar commercials for years (at the time, Danny Kaye's were among the best), but *TW3* did them one better. In one instance, a silly but genuine catsup commercial was run as scheduled. It featured talking hamburger buns that, at the spot's end, joyfully threw their tops into the air when they heard the brand of catsup to be used. When the show resumed, the cast added an unexpected coda: As David Frost began talking to the audience, dozens of hamburger bun tops fell from above and covered him.

The program was at its best, though, in its semi-serious and topical moments. Guest comics Sandy Baron and Alan Alda appeared as a pair of singing segregationist plumbers. Puppeteer Tillstrom staged an award-winning detente of East and West hand puppets that met atop the Berlin wall. President Lyndon Johnson's infamous beagle episode (in which the president lifted one of his pet dogs by its ears) inspired a sendup featuring handpuppet HBJ (Him Beagle Johnson) being snatched by giant presidential hands before it could reveal LBJ's choice for his vice presidential running mate. Johnson was a godsend to the writers because he had so many easily caricatured qualities: he was tall, earthy, and a Texan with an obvious accent. As humorous a target as Johnson was, Barry Goldwater, a Republican presidential candidate in 1964, was even more tempting. One of the most effective (and disturbing) putdowns of Goldwater came in the form of a puppet reading various quotes from the candidate's public statements.

In its first half season (January through June of 1964), *TW3* did fairly well as a Friday night lead-in to Jack Paar. When David Frost took over as host in the fall of 1964, however, NBC moved the program to perhaps the toughest spot on its schedule, Tuesday night against *Petticoat Junction* and *Peyton Place.* Besides facing two top ten shows, *TW3* came into direct conflict with the 1964 presidential campaign. Just as the elections in Britain had caused the end of the BBC version of *TW3,* the American presidential elections effectively doomed the U.S. counterpart, though in a very unusual way. The fate of *TW3,* however, was just one minor skirmish in a running battle over the proper role of television in the contest. As in its civil rights reporting, the medium's own actions were as severely scrutinized as the candidates' campaign strategies. Once again, a deep resentment of television reporting was revealed.

The competition between the network news departments (especially between CBS and NBC) was particularly fierce that year as *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* found itself at the start of a yearlong deadlock with Walter Cronkite for nightly news supremacy. Traditional wisdom in broadcasting circles held that the network which won the convention and election coverage would carry the momentum into the lucrative nightly news shows and probably remain on top for the next four years. An increased interest in the early spring primaries provided a convenient warm-up arena, and all three networks took the opportunity to roll out their latest gimmick, computers, to help them make "instant vote projections." John Kennedy's dramatic primary victories in 1960 had alerted reporters to the potential importance of these local contests and, with larger staffs and new technological tricks available, it seemed strategically wise to cover them. As the votes in these elections came in that spring, CBS, NBC, and ABC raced with each other to be the first to declare a winner, using their fancy new equipment. The speed techniques did more than impress the regular viewers and politicians watching; it left them flabbergasted. How could the networks declare a winner with only a minuscule percentage of the vote totals in? CBS, for example, declared Senator Barry Goldwater the victor in the crucial California primary in June with only 2% of the state's vote totals listed on the tote board.

Actually, the feat was illusory. The network computers did not rely on the official vote tallies for the projections because these not only took hours to trickle in, they were often quite misleading as well (an area strongly supporting one candidate might report in first and show a huge lead that would be wiped out by subsequent reports). Instead, each of the networks employed statistical analysis techniques using the results from a handful of key precincts that had been targeted (from past voting patterns) to provide a highly educated projection of what the final totals for the state would be. Samplers were placed in these precincts and they called the networks directly as soon as the votes were counted, allowing television to call a race often within two hours after the polls closed, compared to a turn-over time of six hours in the past. Instant vote projection was really the result of long hard work and calculated preparation, but the shorthand label stuck and the audience saw the final product in that light. Though there was nothing dishonest about the technique, it nonetheless irked people and raised vague suspicions and resentments. With instant vote projections, the networks had taken away much of the fun from election night with its ever-changing see-saw totals that hinged on every vote. In fact, they also seemed to reduce the importance of each individual vote by using just a sample to pronounce an election decided. To some this was TV news at its most arrogant and intrusive, appointing itself national election judge and showing off its influence on the perception of politics and current events, reducing everything to just more programming fodder.

Anger at the network news operations surfaced unexpectedly at the Republican National Convention at San Francisco's Cow Palace in July, during a speech by former president Dwight Eisenhower, the grand old man of the GOP. In the course of a traditional pep talk address, Eisenhower touched off a spontaneous roar when he unexpectedly condemned "sensation seeking columnists and commentators" (an ironic generalization because Eisenhower was serving as a commentator for ABC at the time). The phrase had been inserted at the last minute and the delegates eagerly took the opportunity to express their deep distrust (even hate) for TV news to the nation at large. For five minutes they jeered and screamed, shaking their fists at Huntley and Brinkley who were encased in the NBC glass booth high above the arena floor, looking down. Many supporters of Senator Goldwater, whose conservative forces controlled the convention (as the result of a brilliant state-by-state primary and caucus strategy), honestly felt that TV news was a disrupting influence on America. If there were any doubters among them, they were convinced by a report carried by CBS while the convention was still in progress. The CBS correspondent in Germany, Daniel Schorr, reported that Goldwater had plans to visit West Germany after the convention and meet with his "counterpart" right wingers. Very few people missed the Nazi allusion, intended or not, and Goldwater was forced to cancel the trip to prevent the negative association from sinking in any deeper. He was rightly incensed and CBS was properly embarrassed.

CBS also lost in the ratings race at the Republican convention, with Huntley and Brinkley clobbering Walter Cronkite by a wide margin. In a desperate move to improve the ratings at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City the next month, CBS executives replaced Cronkite (CBS's sole anchor at special events since 1952) with the team of Robert Trout and Roger Mudd. Though Cronkite insisted he did not take the action as an insult, people throughout the nation did. "We Want Cronkite" buttons popped up all through the Democratic gathering and viewers across the nation complained. CBS reinstated him for the election coverage in November, apparently deciding that it was best not to tamper with a national personality so obviously loved and admired. Besides, the Trout-Mudd team had fared no better than Cronkite anyway.

The campaign in the fall between Goldwater and President Johnson was one of the most bitter and vicious races in years, and television was the forum for one of the major battles: imagery. Using some campaign commercials that bordered on being downright unethical, the Democratic Party subtly (and not so subtly) painted Goldwater as a man likely to kill little children by irresponsibly and indiscriminately using nuclear power. In September, the message relied on subtle implication: A cute little girl was shown gathering daisies in a field and counting to herself as she picked the petals from the flowers. Her counting blended with and was replaced by the countdown to an atomic bomb explosion. At detonation, the fiery blast replaced the little girl on the screen. Then, Lyndon Johnson was heard saying: "These are the stakes—to make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the dark." An announcer then urged viewers to vote for Johnson on election day, saying that "the stakes are too high for you to stay at home." Not voting for Johnson apparently would lead to nuclear disaster. This commercial was considered so outrageous that it was withdrawn after only one official appearance (during a movie on NBC on September 7), but it was then picked up in news reports and played so often there that its message reached an audience far beyond its single play.

Another commercial aired soon after this and left less to the imagination. Another cute little girl was shown licking an ice cream cone as a voice-over announcer calmly explained that the girl could be in serious trouble. The ice cream could contain some dangerous strontium 90 radiation from nuclear fallout because Barry Goldwater had opposed the nuclear test ban treaty. If he were elected, there was no telling how long the little girl might last. Though the Democrats pulled this spot after Republican complaints, the damage had been done. Millions had seen it.

The Republicans, through the Mothers for a Moral America, presented their own lapse in taste, a thirty-minute film, "Choice." The movie painted a picture of the U.S. on the edge of moral collapse with images of topless bathing suits, pornographic book

November 9, 1964
The Les Crane Show. (ABC). Johnny Carson at last faces some network competition in the late night talk show game. Thirty-year-old Les Crane generally steers his ninety-minute show towards substantive issues rather than celebrity chit chat, using an "in the round" setting and a shotgun microphone to take questions from the audience.

January 1, 1965
After four years, ABC gives up its Monday-through-Friday fifteen-minute late night news program and instead institutes a similar format on weekends only.

January 12, 1965
Hullabaloo. (NBC). A glitzy copy of ABC's *Shindig,* emphasizing scantily-clad, wildly gyrating "go-go" dancers and using mainstream pop stars such as Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon as guest hosts.

February 1, 1965
Twenty-six-year-old Canadian newsman Peter Jennings replaces Ron Cochran as the anchor of ABC's nightly fifteen-minute news show.

April 27, 1965
Edward R. Murrow, 57, dies of lung cancer.

May 10, 1965
The Merv Griffin Show. Group W revamps its syndicated late night talk show, installing Merv Griffin and his sidekick, Arthur Treacher.

June 7, 1965
Sony introduces the first commercial home video tape recorder. Price: $995.

covers, and frenzied black rioters as illustration. It was scheduled to run on NBC on October 22, but at the last minute Goldwater repudiated the production as "nothing but a racist film" in its portrayal of blacks and canceled it.

Goldwater's personal TV presentations were remarkably traditional in comparison to such titillating fare, largely relying on the old style of buying thirty-minute blocks of time to plug his campaign rather than using the already well-established technique of presenting thirty- or sixty-second ads. Nonetheless, he did manage to stage his own bit of subtle media manipulation. He arranged for his thirty-minute programs to be scheduled, as often as possible, on Tuesdays at 9:30 P.M. on NBC, preempting *That Was The Week That Was,* which constantly ribbed the senator in its skits. The September 22, 1964, season premiere of *TW3* was replaced by Goldwater's program. The September 29 episode would also have been preempted but NBC had already agreed to sell a sixty-second spot on the show to the Democrats, so *TW3* began its new season only a week late. However, the Republicans managed to buy out the October 6, October 13, and October 27 slots. When they were unable to preempt the show on October 20, they bought a half-hour of time on CBS, to compete with *TW3*. Tuesday, November 3, was election day, so NBC's election coverage wiped out the evening's regular programs. At last, on November 10, a week after the election and President Johnson's landslide victory, *TW3* responded to Goldwater's shenanigans by beginning that week's episode with a film of his concession speech, adding a voiceover announcer who substituted the words, "Due to circumstances beyond control, the regularly scheduled political broadcast scheduled for this time is pre-empted."

It was an appropriate, very funny response, but *TW3* had already been mortally crippled in its quest for even passable ratings. In the vital first weeks of the season, it had rarely been on. *Peyton Place* and *Petticoat Junction* were top ten hits and it was doubtful that many viewers would turn to NBC instead, except perhaps by accident. By spring, *TW3* was gone, a victim of low ratings and a change in attitudes. In the seventeen months since the enthusiastic reception given the *TW3* pilot, the mood in the country had changed. There were deep feelings of confusion, frustration, and resentment among viewers. Fewer and fewer people felt like laughing at anything so close to home as the news.

1965–66 SEASON

25. The Second Season

IN THE FALL OF 1965, FOR THE FIRST TIME in television history, all three networks presented their entire set of new season premieres in one week. For seven nights, beginning September 12, viewers were faced with a staggering selection of thirty-five new programs, and more than sixty returning shows. This insane competition marked a complete turnaround from the previous network practice of stringing out the season premieres from late September through mid-October, a procedure that had been in effect for nearly two decades. The reason for the change was quite simple: the CBS ratings romp of the early 1960s had turned into a tight, three-way race and none of the networks could afford to allow their competitors the slightest advantage.

ABC, which had fallen back to last place after a brief fling at the number two spot in the early 1960s, had initiated the practice of a single week for the premieres of its new shows in the fall of 1963. When the network repeated the strategy in the fall of 1964, it scooted to the number one position for the first two ratings reports of the 1964–65 season. Even though CBS regained the lead by November, ABC remained in its best position in years. Building on the advantage provided by its strong early returns, ABC nosed out NBC as the number two network for the season. NBC and CBS had no intention of allowing ABC to repeat that success in the 1965–66 season and both entered the September melee with their own premiere weeks.

The practice of scattering the premieres of new programs over one month, starting in late September, had begun in the early days of network radio and had been automatically carried over to TV. It was said that such a leisurely pace gave viewers plenty of time to notice and tune in new shows while continuing to follow their old favorites. Consequently, the best way to launch a new show was to slot it either before or after a proven hit in order to catch the spillover audience. Such a policy obviously favored the network with the greatest number of established hit shows and left most of the new programs on the others unwatched and unnoticed. An industry rule-of-thumb developed: The network with the greatest number of new shows in the fall would probably be the network that came in last. Since the early 1960s, ABC had been in the position of changing nearly one-half of its schedule every fall, and, more than any other network, it had to constantly combat viewer indifference to its unfamiliar new programs. As a result, the network had become locked in the number three position and was desperate for a way to break out. The experimental premiere weeks in 1963 and 1964 were just another ploy in its search for a solution.

ABC's placement of all its new shows in one eye-catching dramatic seven-day sweep made a great deal of sense. With NBC and CBS still in summer reruns, viewers were more inclined to give ABC a chance. As a result, several of its new shows such as *Twelve O'Clock High, The Addams Family, Bewitched, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea,* and *Shindig* became hits early in the 1964–65 season. Some programs even managed to maintain their momentum once the other two networks unveiled their own new offerings. For example, *Peyton Place,* ABC's experiment in prime time soap opera, received an invaluable boost when viewers tuned in the first week "just to see what all the fuss was about" and became hooked by the dramatic complications and character conflicts. Returning ABC programs benefited as well. *Ben Casey,* for instance, had nearly been canceled after a very weak performance against *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* in the 1963–64 season but, with the head start provided by the premiere week in 1964, it found its old audience and became a hit again in a new time period. In short, ABC's plan worked and the network broke the vicious cycle that had helped condemn it to last place.

The quick lead and continued strength of ABC during the 1964–65 season were a dramatic slap to CBS and its president, James Aubrey. Though, technically, a number of specials and preemptions (for the Summer Olympics and presidential election campaign) had provided the extra boost that took ABC to the top in its premiere week, there was no denying that the unchallenged king of TV had been seriously shaken. Worse yet, of CBS's own new programs for the 1964–65 season, only *Gomer Pyle* and *Gilligan's Island* were major successes. Drawing on the strength of its veteran hits, CBS regained the ratings lead by Thanksgiving, but by a very slim margin. Faced with the very real possibility of presiding over the network's first losing season in more than a decade, Aubrey boldly broke another industry tradition himself and began a major mid-season overhaul of the CBS schedule.

For years, the networks had operated under the assumption that it was meaningless to tamper significantly with their schedules once the season had begun. It was felt that viewing patterns for the year were formed and set by late November and would not change until the summer break and the next fall. Certainly there had been alterations in the network schedules between January and March in the past, but they were usually a stop-gap maneuver and not part of an overall programming strategy. Aubrey's actions were a calculated effort to repair the damage suffered in the fall and to steer CBS back to undisputed control of first place.

FALL 1965 SCHEDULE

	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
MON	local	Twelve O'Clock High		THE LEGEND OF JESSE JAMES	A MAN CALLED SHENANDOAH	The Farmer's Daughter	Ben Casey		ABC
	local	To Tell The Truth	I've Got A Secret	The Lucy Show	Andy Griffith Show	Hazel	STEVE LAWRENCE SHOW		CBS
	local	Hullabaloo	JOHN FORSYTH SHOW	Dr. Kildare	Andy Williams Show # Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall		RUN FOR YOUR LIFE		NBC
TUE	local	Combat!		McHale's Navy	F TROOP	Peyton Place	The Fugitive		ABC
	local	Rawhide		Red Skelton Hour		Petticoat Junction	CBS Reports CBS News Specials		CBS
	local	MY MOTHER THE CAR	PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES	Dr. Kildare	NBC Tuesday Night At The Movies				NBC
WED	local	Adventures Of Ozzie And Harriet	Patty Duke Show	GIDGET	THE BIG VALLEY		Amos Burke, Secret Agent		ABC
	local	LOST IN SPACE		The Beverly Hillbillies	GREEN ACRES	Dick Van Dyke Show	Danny Kaye Show		CBS
	local	The Virginian			Bob Hope Presents The Chrysler Theater # Bob Hope Show		I SPY		NBC
THR	local	Shindig	Donna Reed Show	O.K. CRACKERBY	Bewitched	Peyton Place	THE LONG HOT SUMMER		ABC
	local	The Munsters	Gilligan's Island	My Three Sons	CBS THURSDAY NIGHT MOVIES				CBS
	local	Daniel Boone		LAREDO		MONA McCLUSKEY	DEAN MARTIN SHOW		NBC
FRI	local	The Flintstones	TAMMY	The Addams Family	HONEY WEST	Peyton Place	Jimmy Dean Show		ABC
	local	THE WILD, WILD WEST		HOGAN'S HEROES	Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.	SMOTHERS BROTHERS SHOW	Slattery's People		CBS
	local	CAMP RUNAMUCK	HANK	CONVOY		MR. ROBERTS	The Man From U.N.C.L.E.		NBC
SAT	local	Shindig	The King Family Show	Lawrence Welk Show		Hollywood Palace		ABC Scope	ABC
	local	Jackie Gleason Show		TRIALS OF O'BRIEN		THE LONER	Gunsmoke		CBS
	local	Flipper	I DREAM OF JEANNIE	GET SMART	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies				NBC
SUN	Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea		THE FBI		The ABC Sunday Night Movie				ABC
	Lassie	My Favorite Martian	Ed Sullivan Show		Perry Mason		Candid Camera	What's My Line	CBS
	Bell Telephone Hour NBC News Sp. (fr. 6:30)	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		Branded	Bonanza		THE WACKIEST SHIP IN THE ARMY		NBC

The underlying assumption of Aubrey's mid-season revamping was that the new CBS shows were good, but the schedule had not been put together quite right. He made eleven changes for the winter of 1965, focusing his efforts on shifting time slots rather than introducing new shows. For example, *Slattery's People,* a traditional lawyer drama starring Richard Crenna and featuring Ed Asner, was shifted from Monday night opposite the resuscitated *Ben Casey* to Friday night following *Gomer Pyle,* replacing the weak newspaper melodrama of *The Reporter.* The reasoning was simple: *Slattery's People* had received good critical reviews and should have been able to develop into a hit against a fading veteran, but the show had faltered when *Ben Casey* experienced its surprise revival. With Gomer as a new lead-in, *Slattery's People* could benefit from his spillover audience and slow down the progress of *Twelve O'Clock High,* a new but increasingly popular ABC show. Aubrey discarded the mediocre *Reporter* series and, with a clever trick, even managed to reduce the ratings damage on Monday night. Though he conceded the slot to *Ben Casey* and ABC by moving in *CBS Reports,* he stripped the news program of all national advertising, realizing that the Nielsen company did not count unsponsored shows in the ratings. Other shifts followed a similar pattern and involved such "deserving" programs as the sitcom *My Living Doll* (Julie Newmar as a gorgeous female robot).

Aubrey's frantic mid-season changes worked no miracles, though CBS's ratings improved slightly and it managed to eke out a slim victory for the 1964–65 season. At the end of February 1965, Aubrey was fired. Rarely in television history had any executive fallen so far, so fast. Yet there were suggestions that Aubrey had undercut his own position by allowing three very weak programs (*The Reporter, The Baileys of Balboa,* and *The Cara Williams Show*) onto CBS's 1964–65 schedule because he had a financial interest in their production outfit. What's more, the poor showing by all three was seen as the central reason CBS had begun to slip in the fall of 1964. When Aubrey's winter tinkering failed to magically restore the network to its previously unquestioned supremacy, he became a marked man under a cloud of suspicion. Aubrey was replaced by Jack Schneider, whose main background was in sales and administration, rather than programming. He faced the task of keeping CBS on top for the 1965–66 season in what promised to be another tight race.

With all three networks launching the 1965–66 season the same week in head-to-head competition, any small advantage was seen as potentially decisive. NBC and CBS focused on color as the gimmick that could provide the edge necessary for victory because a decade after color TV sets first went on sale, consumers were buying them in great numbers at last. The long-hoped-for color boom had begun with set sales and color broadcasting growing dramatically in just two years. During 1964 there was a 77% increase in color set purchases. In the fall of 1964, NBC launched the first major color season, with more than 50% of its programming in full tint. During the summer of 1965, the networks began covering live news events such as space shots in color. In the fall of 1965, NBC became the first nearly all-color network with only two of its shows, *I Dream of Jeannie* and *Convoy,* in black and white. At the same time, CBS reached the 50% color mark in its schedule. ABC lagged far behind both and felt the pinch immediately as the ratings for the 1965 fall premieres came in. Not only had it lost the advantage of having the only premiere week on television, it also had not moved fast enough on color. For the first time ever, all of the top ten shows were in color. Six percent of American TV homes had color sets and, not surprisingly, people with color sets watched color shows more than the national average. ABC found its black and white stalwarts such as *Peyton Place* and *Ben Casey* sliding lower and lower in the ratings.

CBS and NBC took a strong lead in the new season and once again ABC was in the cellar, facing the grim prospect of a major overhaul of its schedule for the 1966–67 season. Driven by desperation, the network decided to discard another industry tradition in the hope of salvaging the 1965–66 season. After the fall premieres, the networks usually focused their attention on setting up the next season's schedule, locking it up by February, and letting unsuccessful shows run their course. If Aubrey had achieved moderate success for CBS in 1964–65 with his mid-season tinkering, why not go one step further: treat January like a new season, with both new programs and major time shifts. A house cleaning would be necessary anyway, so why wait until the next fall? Thus, in January 1966, ABC launched "the second season."

The early September premiere week made a so-called second season possible. In the early 1960s, the bible of network TV, the Nielsen ratings book (published twice each month), took almost a week to compile, print, and distribute. For example, the book covering the period of September 5 through September 19 (called the "first September" book) would not be in the hands of eager executives until the last days of the month. The book covering September 20 through October 3 (called the "second September" book) would arrive in mid-October. Each month contained a "first" and "second" book with similar delays, so that when the fall premieres stretched from mid-September through October, the first Nielsen book to take into account all of the new shows for the fall was the second October report, which was not in print until the first week of November. Now, with the new season completely launched by mid-September, the second September ratings book could function as the first true gauge of a program's popularity, and thus reliable information on program performance was available an entire month earlier than before. There was enough time to plan and select shows for a second season that could begin in January.

The obvious ramification of a formal second season was that more programs were given a chance to air. This was a double-edged development because, at the same time, a potentially popular show with low ratings at the start might be yanked off the air before it had a chance to build an audience. In the process, having a second season start in January delayed until March final decisions on the next fall's line-ups because programmers wanted to see how well second season entries performed.

ABC unveiled its second season amid great fanfare ("The excitement of the fall starts all over again!"), but most of the new shows bombed, which was not surprising because most new ABC shows at the time bombed. Despite the additional month available to prepare, many of ABC's new shows were thrown together at the last minute or quickly imported from England. Nonetheless, some of the time shifts worked well. *Peyton Place,* for instance, changed from a Tuesday-Thursday-Friday rotation to a Monday-Tuesday-Friday arrangement, and its ratings returned to the level of the 1964–65 season. In addition, the network increased its percentage of color programs. Most important, ABC came up with a smash hit to revitalize its schedule, the camp heroic adventures of *Batman.*

Critics had often complained that television was filled with comic-book-type characters. *Batman* accepted the comic book roots of its hero not as a putdown but as an inspiration, proudly flaunting them, though in a very different manner from its fraternal crime stopper, Superman. The syndicated *Adventures of Superman* television series of the 1950s had the trappings of the comic book adventures (the man of steel's colorful costume, invulnerability, power to fly, and super-strength), but ultimately it was just a traditional kiddie-cop adventure presenting Superman as an exceptional, but in many ways typical, stalwart crime fighter. He usually faced the same faceless hoods and routine crimes encountered by his colleagues in the police force and private detective agencies. Batman (billed in the comics as "the world's greatest detective") could have easily fit into the same mold. Instead, producer William Dozier went a different direction and enlisted writer Lorenzo Semple, Jr. (who became executive story editor) to shape a hero appropriate for an age of superhero-type spies and secret agents. They looked not so much at the character of Batman but at the gimmicks surrounding him and, most important, at the style of the comic book medium itself with its flashy colors, impossible gadgets, and unusual action sequences. Dozier decided to stage the series as a television comic book, but with one important difference: all the comic book elements were grossly exaggerated and the program turned into one huge tongue-in-cheek joke. After all, could two adults in leotards and capes really be taken seriously?

Adam West (as Batman and the caped crusader's alter ego,

Gourmet food was often the order of the day for Colonel Hogan (Bob Crane, *left*) at Stalag 13 on *Hogan's Heroes,* aided here by guest star Hans Conried as Major Bonacelli. *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*

September 12, 1965
After building a following for five years on ABC, the American Football League jumps to NBC.

September 14, 1965
My Mother the Car. (NBC). Jerry Van Dyke plays a suburban hubby who discovers his dead mother reincarnated as a decrepit automobile on a used car lot. Ann Sothern supplies the voice for "mother," who speaks to her son through the car radio.

September 15, 1965
Green Acres. (CBS). Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor play backwards Clampetts (city slickers that move to the country) in a third-generation Paul Henning hillbilly spinoff.

September 16, 1965
The Dean Martin Show. (NBC). Martin returns to television in an easy-going variety hour carried almost completely by his relaxed, slightly naughty personality.

September 16, 1965
CBS Thursday Night Movies. (CBS). The number one network becomes the last to add prime time movies, beginning with Frank Sinatra in "The Manchurian Candidate" from 1962.

September 18, 1965
I Dream of Jeannie. (NBC). Barbara Eden plays a beautiful 2,000-year-old magical genie who attaches herself to an American astronaut (played by Larry Hagman). As "lord and master," he gets as many wishes as he wants.

September 19, 1965
The FBI. (ABC). Quinn Martin presents Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. in a series based on actual cases from the FBI's files.

October 24, 1965
With the debut of Saturday's *Scherer-MacNeil Report* (anchored by Ray Scherer and Robert MacNeil) and Sunday's *Frank McGee Report* (in addition to the weekday *Huntley-Brinkley Report*) NBC becomes the first television network to offer thirty minutes of nightly news seven days a week.

aristocrat-goldbrick Bruce Wayne) and Burt Ward (as Robin the Boy Wonder and Dick Grayson, Wayne's young ward) played the heroes as marvelous caricatures of the gung-ho, power of positive thinking super patriots that had dominated comics since World War II. Batman and Robin were very, *very* serious about fighting crime in Gotham City but, though they never cracked jokes, much of what they said was hilarious. With a perfectly straight face, Batman would wax prosaic on the evils of crime and the importance of good citizenship, even while struggling to escape from a seemingly foolproof trap. Robin greeted every challenge with boyish enthusiasm and shamelessly displayed his perception of the obvious with such phrases as "Holy ice cubes, Batman! It's getting cold!" It was too ridiculous to be true; so naive that it was preposterous; so bad that it was good. That was Dozier's trump card. By hopelessly exaggerating every aspect of the show, he fashioned an environment that re-created the comic book world for children but also offered "camp" humor for the teenagers and adults. The style touched every aspect of the show, from the full-screen comic book captions that adorned every fight (matching each punch to some "Crunch!," "Pow!," "ZAP!," or "Ka-zonk" type graphic superimposed on the scene) to the dramatically hokey voiceover announcer-narrator (Dozier himself) who solemnly posed the inevitable question in each episode: "Is this the end of Batman and Robin?" The series, in color, ran twice each week, on Wednesday and Thursday nights, and Dozier ended the Wednesday episodes with absurd cliff-hangers designed to lure even the most incredulous audience back for part two: "same bat-time, same bat-channel!" The exaggerated perils were a direct sendup of the many kiddie serials that had run on the radio and in the movie theaters during the 1930s and 1940s, using the cliff-hanger come-on to coax fans back for the next episode. At various mid-week climaxes, Batman and Robin were on the verge of being frozen, fried, eaten by lions, unmasked, or turned into postage stamps. The two heroes used a ludicrous arsenal of "bat" gimmicks in their weekly skirmishes including the batmobile, batcopter, batcomputer, batpole, and batarang; all housed, of course, in the batcave.

At the beginning of each story, Police Commissioner Gordon (Neil Hamilton) would solemnly summon Batman and Robin by using a special batphone "hotline," or by switching on a rooftop batsignal searchlight. The reason was always the same: Some dastardly villain had appeared. That might have been cause for alarm in Gotham City, but it was good news for viewers because a wide range of Hollywood performers donned the garb of Batman's most popular comic book opponents. Unlike the dynamic duo, the villains in the series obviously were having a great time and relished the opportunity to taunt their hated adversaries with clues to their impending crimes. For them, the thrill of battle mattered more than the cold hard cash. Burgess Meredith (Penguin), Cesar Romero (Joker), and Frank Gorshin (Riddler) were the most popular guest stars, though others such as Art Carney (Archer), Vincent Price (Egghead), Maurice Evans (Puzzler), George Sanders (Mr. Freeze), David Wayne (Mad Hatter), Victor Buono (King Tut), and, at various times, Julie Newmar, Eartha Kitt, and Lee Ann Meriwether (Catwoman) were equally entertaining. Each performer brought a frenzied lunacy to the role (mad laughter was the most common trait among them) and their antics were the effective balance to the mock-deadpan of Batman and Robin.

Dozier's comic book for television combined superb guests, camp humor, colorful costumes, unusual camera work (emphasizing weird angles), and pure imagination. The result was an instant hit that justified ABC's second season gamble and gave viewers something unusual to laugh at beyond the thick-headed antics of Gomer Pyle and Gilligan. *Batman* relied on the traditional battle between good and evil, but treated the melodramatic conflict as a very silly game in which the villains were the most appealing characters. (Batman and Robin were far too serious and the police were incredibly dumb.) Though by no means the only tongue-in-cheek program that season, *Batman* was undoubtedly the most distinctive. It launched a nationwide bat-craze, inspired countless parodies in every medium (most never matching the original), and revealed a willingness among viewers to laugh at square-jawed heroics and pillars of authority.

The late-blooming success of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* the previous season had set the stage for the influx of tongue-in-cheek heroes starting in the fall of 1965, as all three networks rushed to follow the lead of Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin. Not since ABC's overdose of action-adventure clones from *Maverick* and *77 Sunset Strip* had so many flippant characters appeared. Unlike the uninspired knockoffs at the turn of the decade, this new wave of programs contained first class writing, clever situations, and very talented performers.

Foremost among these programs was Britain's *The Avengers* which ABC brought to America as part of its second season lineup. By this time, Honor Blackman had departed from the series and Patrick Macnee (as John Steed) had a new cohort, the lovely, leggy Diana Rigg (as Mrs. Emma Peel), who picked up the saucy, flippant interplay and the deliciously ambiguous relationship with Steed. Like Mrs. Gale, she was a strong, sexy, independent woman who could fight crime as well as any man. Such a notion was practically unheard of at the time in American television (the best the Stateside networks could offer was Anne Francis as a female private eye, *Honey West*), and *The Avengers* began building a strong American cult following and winning high critical praise.

Homegrown productions included both tongue-in-cheek spy thrillers and sharp sitcom spoofs that marked a return to the quality of such classics as *Sergeant Bilko.* The two adventure series that came directly out of the *U.N.C.L.E.* mold were NBC's *I Spy* and CBS's *The Wild, Wild West,* which both featured pairs of witty, resourceful agents. *I Spy* presented Robert Culp and Bill Cosby as U.S. government agents (posing as an international tennis star and his trainer) roaming the world in search of Russian, Asian, and mobster bigwigs. Though eschewing the Bond-U.N.C.L.E. device of a fictional super-secret non-aligned organization of evil in favor of more realistic foes and dramatic situations, the program's location shots and humorous edge were its chief attractions. Cosby, a veteran comic and nightclub entertainer, worked in some snappy patter with Culp (often about Cosby's ghetto youth in Philadelphia) as they engaged in typical spy shenanigans throughout the world. At first it had been feared that Cosby's co-starring status would be a possible trouble spot for the show, but the mere presence of a black performer on television was no longer automatically considered a major risk. Only three NBC affiliates refused to air the series (in Albany, Georgia; Savannah, Georgia; and Daytona Beach, Florida). Television was improving its attitude on racial matters and, in fact, the industry felt comfortable enough to award Cosby an Emmy for his *I Spy* role.

CBS's *The Wild, Wild West* offered a unique combination of espionage and Western adventure by reaching all the way back to the *Maverick* roots of flippant cowboys for its unlikely premise of two spies operating in the American West of the 1870s. President Ulysses S. Grant personally assigned special U.S. government agents James T. West (Robert Conrad) and Artemus Gordon (Ross Martin) to the Western frontier, though it was never made quite clear exactly who or what menace inspired fears of such threats out amid the sagebrush and tumbling tumbleweeds. The producers and writers never let that bother them, nor did they feel obligated to explain what some of the best electronic gadgets of the twentieth century were doing in the 1870s (thinly disguised as "contemporary" inventions of the time). Instead, they used the unique hook provided by the combination of genres to gently spoof both Westerns and spy formats while, at the same time, developing exceptionally off-beat and intriguing stories. Conrad and Martin displayed the required light banter in the face of danger and even managed to "save the Western world" (of the nineteenth century) from the schemes of crazed madmen such as their most frequent foe, Dr. Miguelito Loveless (Michael Dunn), a dwarf with grand ambitions. With its fabulous cast and crew, *The Wild, Wild West* became a solid, entertaining hybrid and a CBS Friday night staple for four seasons.

Action and humor had teamed up earlier in television history in such series as *Maverick,* but in the new programs the line between adventure and comedy grew increasingly fuzzy. The season's best adventure shows were tongue-in-cheek while the best new sitcoms were spoofs of familiar dramatic settings. In the comedies the stories were certainly exaggerated and silly, but they still retained enough action, mock-horror shootouts, and plot complications to function as adequate, though absurd, dramatic adventures. Among the most resilient of the new comedy-adventures was the marvelously mad put-on of *Get Smart,* which managed to outlast all of the other new video spies.

A product of the collective dementia of Buck Henry, Mel Brooks, and Howard Morris, *Get Smart* featured Don Adams as the bumbling, over-confident klutz, Maxwell Smart, secret agent 86 for a CIA-type organization, Control. *Get Smart* used the passion for absurd spy gimmicks as the launching pad for its gags and built from there. U.N.C.L.E. headquarters was hidden behind a false wall in a dry cleaning store, so to gain entrance to Control, Smart had to drop through the false floor of a phone booth. While Solo and Kuryakin used sophisticated communication devices the size of a ballpoint pen, Smart had to dial a telephone that was hidden in his shoe. Adams's hilarious portrayal of Smart, though, was the strong comic hub for the show. He was the classic bumbling idiot that won important battles in spite of himself (a character type Adams had developed on the short-lived *Bill Dana Show* in which he played an incompetent hotel detective, Byron Glick). With a superb sense of timing year after year, Adams milked laughs from

October 29, 1965
ABC throws in the towel on late night television, axing Les Crane's show, which had been renamed *ABC Nightlife* in March.

November 15, 1965
NBC's *Huntley-Brinkley Report* goes to color. Walter Cronkite's news show on CBS follows suit on January 31, 1966.

December 9, 1965
"A Charlie Brown Christmas." (CBS). Charles Schulz brings the "Peanuts" gang to television for the first time, in an animated family special.

December 20, 1965
The Dating Game. (ABC). Former ABC program executive Chuck Barris updates the 1940s *Blind Date* premise of eager bachelors trying to win a date with an eligible woman.

January 1, 1966
Robert Kinter, president of NBC-TV since 1958, is forcibly "kicked upstairs" to the position of chairman of the NBC board (a largely figurehead position he resigns a mere three months later). At the same time, "The General," David Sarnoff, gives up his day-to-day control of RCA, but remains as RCA chairman of the board.

June 6, 1966
Till Death Us Do Part. (BBC). Alf Garnett (Warren Mitchell) is television's first humorous bigot in this sharp-tongued but insightful working class sitcom set in a rundown area of London.

July 11, 1966
The Newlywed Game. (ABC). *Dating Game* creator Chuck Barris taps twenty-eight-year-old California DJ Bob Eubanks as host to a playful companion contest that brings together newlyweds to blush over the intimate details of married life. "Making whoopee," the show's chosen TV euphemism for having sex, becomes its signature catch phrase.

Robert Conrad *(right)* and Ross Martin played government agents operating in *The Wild, Wild West* of the 1870s. *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*

such phrases as "Sorry about that, Chief!" (a deadpan apology to his superior following a major foul-up) and "Would you believe?" (a transparent attempt to bluff a hidden back-up force when his opponents had the upper hand).

At first, series regulars Edward Platt, as the chief of Control, and Barbara Feldon, as agent 99, often found themselves acting as "straightman" to the buffoonery of Smart, though as the program developed, their roles were expanded. *Get Smart* managed to survive even as interest in spies waned in the late 1960s because it never lost its comic touch and sense of imagination. As programs such as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* began reaching for cheap, obvious gags to pump new life into the spy format, *Get Smart* turned to other fields for humor and began using its "family" of players in parodies of classic films, other TV shows, and even its own ridiculous conventions and gag lines—while staying within the spy motif. *Get Smart* became an excellent, flexible vehicle for Adams and an effective parody of larger-than-life espionage adventures through all of its stories. By the time the series ended in 1970 and Smart had inadvertently saved the world countless times, he and agent 99 were happily married with two children, a humorous reminder that spying could fall into a nine-to-five routine just as easily as any profession.

Two other exceptional new sitcoms, *F Troop* and *Hogan's Heroes,* maintained the high standards of *Get Smart*'s lampoon style, but shifted the focus to the military life. *F Troop* was a Western *Bilko* ripoff that worked, turning the traditional John Wayne-frontier scout-cowboys and Indians story on its head. Situated in the wilds of Kansas after the Civil War, both the Indians and the men of F Troop were far more interested in drinking, sleeping, gambling, and turning a profit than in fighting each other. Bilko surrogates Sergeant Morgan O'Rourke (Forrest Tucker) and Corporal Randolph Agarn (former *Cavalcade of Stars* headliner Larry Storch) managed most of the money-making illegal activities in the area, including a moccasin concession turned out by the local Indian tribe, the "ferocious" Hekawis (as in "where the heck-ah-we?") Most of the plots revolved around O'Rourke and Agarn's constant search for profitable new ventures. The commander at Fort Courage, Captain Wilton Parmenter (Ken Berry), was in a perpetual fog and posed no threat to the O'Rourke-Agarn enterprises. As a member of a family with a distinguished military history, Captain Parmenter had earned his commission by sneezing—and accidentally leading a Union charge to victory in one of the last battles of the Civil War. He was content to let fate guide his career at the fort as well, and O'Rourke and Agarn were only too happy to oblige. In true Bilko style, the only major threats to the happy profitable life of F Troop and the Hekawis came from outsiders, either visiting military brass that insisted the men at the fort go "by the book" (drills! exercise! reveille!), or wandering Indian tribes with the foolish notion of teaming up with the Hekawis for a raid on the fort. ("Hekawis not fighters, we lovers," the chief explained.) The series was a total farce with a heavy emphasis on physical humor and marvelous caricatures. Besides the conniving O'Rourke and Agarn and the spacey Parmenter, there was Melody Patterson as Wrangler Jane (a sharpshooting woman with marriage on her mind and an eye on Captain Parmenter), Edward Everett Horton as Hekawi medicine man Roaring Chicken, and Frank De Kova as Wild Eagle, the cowardly Hekawi chief. Even the men of F Troop maintained the Bilko tradition, resembling a collection of refugees from the Bowery rather than Civil War veterans. Whatever the background, they each carried the Bilko banner of deception, double-dealing, and self-interest proudly, and the show demonstrated that fresh comedy could still be found in the perennial TV staple of the old West.

Hogan's Heroes broke new territory in the field of military comedy as it made fun of the theretofore sacrosanct topic of World War II prisoner of war camps. Spoofing such film and stage productions as "Bridge on the River Kwai" and "Stalag 17," the series presented the inmates of Stalag 13 in total control of their environment. They had a complete system of tunnels under the prison camp and could escape at any time, but they did not. Why should they? There was practically a mini-Pentagon of supplies and services beneath the camp, including custom tailoring, munitions, direct radio contact with the Allies, and gourmet food. They could do more to sabotage the Nazi war machine from the prison camp than anywhere else. Obviously, the premise required a tremendous suspension of belief and some people, seeing no humor in either World War II in general or a group of POWs in particular, were taken aback at first. Actually, the series was a put-on of modern war films (with their super-human somewhat miraculous heroics behind enemy lines) rather than a rewrite of World War II, and in that light the program was eventually seen as very funny and very harmless. As with *Get Smart,* the stories were straightforward adventure yarns, only with absurd twists. The elaborate Allied operations, usually sabotage or aiding fugitives, were run from the POW camp by Col. Robert Hogan, the senior officer (played by Bob Crane, most recently seen as an affable suburban doctor in *Donna Reed*). In the tradition of hundreds of typical war films, Hogan was assisted by a perfectly integrated staff of comrades: one Frenchman, Cpl. LeBeau (Robert Clary); one cockney Englishman, Cpl. Newkirk (Richard Dawson); one American black, Sgt. Kinchloe (Ivan Dixon); and one naïve American kid, Sgt. Carter (Larry Hovis). The missions for the Allies were presented rather straight, but life at Stalag 13 was a completely different story. The Nazis were shown as either bumbling incompetents who really meant well or strutting loudmouths easily duped by Hogan. It was never revealed exactly how the prisoners had managed to set up such a complete battle station in Stalag 13, but the ineptness of camp commandant Wilhelm Klink (Werner Klemperer) and the simple-minded cooperation of porcine prison guard Sgt. Hans Schultz (John Banner) suggested that the task had not been *too* difficult. In fact, the two Germans were considered vital to the continued success of Hogan's operation and many episodes of the series focused not only on Allied missions but on the difficult task of keeping Klink in power and Schultz away from the Russian front. As time went on, Hogan and Klink developed an unconscious, guarded partnership similar to the relationship between the Hekawis and soldiers of *F Troop.* Neither wanted to be bothered by outsiders and both realized that, in a very strange way, they needed each other for survival.

The fall premiere week of 1965–66 and the second season which followed really did generate more excitement over the new shows than usual and, for once, network hype was not totally removed from reality. Though still strongly influenced by Aubrey's philosophy of mindless escapist programming, television had produced some clever variations and intelligent parodies. It even had room for some short-run off-beat series that attracted small cult followings if not high ratings, including *The Trials of O'Brien, Hank,* and second season entry *Blue Light.* At the same time it was displaying new life in entertainment programming, though, the medium was also experiencing painful growth as it faced the increasing complexity of covering events in the real world. There, real military activity was bringing network news departments into conflict with both the government and their own corporate brass.

In the spring of 1965, the independent judgments of network correspondents proved an embarrassment to the government with reports filed on the American intervention in the Dominican Republic. President Johnson had announced that American Marines were being sent to the island merely to protect American civilians from possible harm during the civil disturbances following a government *coup d'etat.* Within a few days of the action, network reporters on the scene began filing stories that the American troops were openly and blatantly aiding the take-over bid of the military faction friendly to the United States government, directly contradicting the president's publicly stated objectives. At first, American officials flatly denied the reporters' statements, but when films arrived showing the troops engaged in combat, the truth became clear. Unlike stories by members of the print medium (even with photographs), the dramatic evidence provided by the network films was all but impossible to dismiss with just a few blustery denials. CBS's Harry Reasoner stated on the evening news that there had been "an apparent shortage of candor" at the White House, the closest a network reporter had ever come to calling a president an outright liar. Nonetheless, this was only a minor irritant for the government compared to the potential havoc such bluntness could cause in a far more important theater of U.S. military intervention, the conflict in Vietnam.

Through 1964 and 1965, ABC, CBS, and NBC steadily increased the size of their staffs in South Vietnam because, as CBS News president Fred Friendly explained, "We are covering this as a war, for that's what it is." The war-type status had developed in August 1964, when the American government announced that two U.S. destroyers had been attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. In response, Congress had passed, almost unanimously, the "blank check" Gulf of Tonkin Resolution giving President Johnson virtual wartime powers to "take all necessary measures to repeal any armed attack against the forces of the U.S. and to prevent further aggression." In March 1965, the first U.S. combat Marines landed in South Vietnam as the American Air Force began continuous bombing raids throughout the North. Without ever having declared it, the United States was at war with a country most Americans could not even pronounce. The networks, however, were ready to apply their growing technical expertise to the difficult challenge of covering the overseas jungle conflict.

It was assumed that the American intervention would last only a few months, so much of the reporting in 1965 reflected an excited, almost adventurous spirit. Unlike the Korean War, with its clumsy battle footage (often provided by the U.S. government itself), the Vietnam conflict offered a unique opportunity for television to place its correspondents in an exotic jungle setting as they filmed their stories for the nightly news programs. CBS's Walter Cronkite took a three-week tour of Vietnam in July of 1965 and filed reports of the visit that focused on the sophisticated hardware and know-how of the American forces. One segment featured Cronkite aboard a plane zooming through the sky while the American pilots aboard proudly explained the bombing apparatus as if it were some shiny new car. For the most part, though, network reports of battle action usually consisted of film of a squad of Marines slogging through some jungle and firing at an unseen enemy somewhere in the bush. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara had stated that the troops would be home by Christmas, and the need to dig deeper into the story did not seem that pressing.

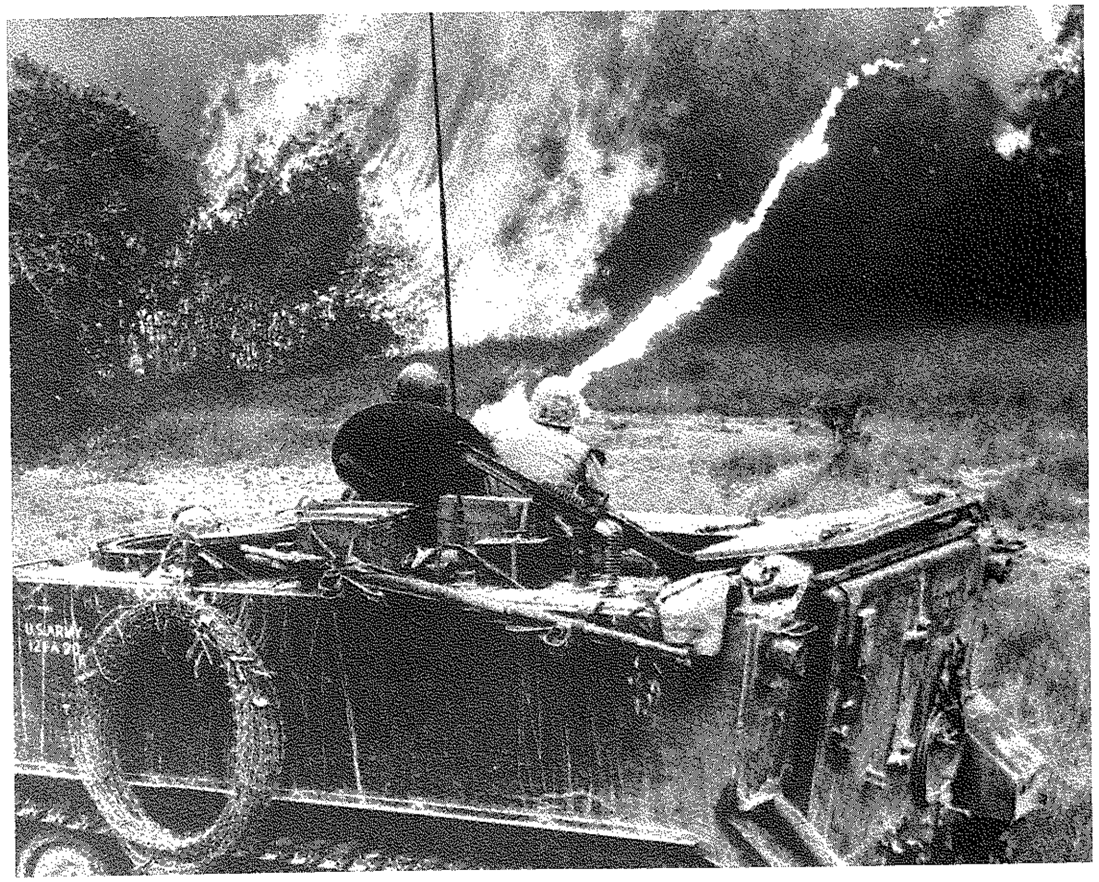
Though many newsmen (like most other Americans) were slow to realize the ramifications of the steadily growing American involvement in Vietnam, the truly remarkable aspect of the coverage was that, despite some government pressure and secrecy, the networks were largely free to cover the venture as they wished. For the first time in history, a government conducting an overseas war relinquished control of the way the war was perceived back home. Vietnam became a true "television war" as many people in the country received most of their information on it from the nightly news coverage and occasional specials on the three networks. Such reports rarely examined the underlying purposes of the war and mostly emphasized very popular and visual aspects such as superficial combat footage, the American GIs adjusting to life overseas, and trivial battle statistics and graphs. Still, the fact remained that the power of government rhetoric had been usurped and replaced by pictures brought directly into the privacy of individual homes across the country.

It was inevitable that such power over forming public opinion on a foreign policy matter would eventually upset the government. In August 1965, just a few months after the Dominican Republic conflict, CBS aired a dramatic film report by Morley Safer that deeply disturbed officials. On the August 5 edition of the *CBS Evening News,* viewers were shown the story of an American outfit destroying some huts in the small Vietnamese village of Cam Ne. It was not so much what was said in the report that bothered the government, but rather the impression the film left behind. While the residents of the village stood by meekly, crying and begging for a reprieve, the Marines methodically set the huts on fire, many using Zippo cigarette lighters to ignite the straw roofs. The image left by the film was potent and needed no elaboration: The United States, a powerful mechanized society, had sent its Marines into a backward rural country and, with apparently no provocation, was systematically destroying it. Whether there had been any enemy activity (by the Viet Cong) in Cam Ne was not really discussed. The chilling efficiency and lack of moral qualms displayed by the Marines (who were obviously in no immediate danger from the civilians) could not help but raise doubts among puzzled citizens as to what the U.S. was really doing there. Other people reacted with anger at CBS, criticizing the network for distorting the story, putting sensationalism above patriotism, and undermining morale. Safer even received mysterious threats on his life. Fred Friendly observed, in response to the protests, "As the power of the [news] medium increases, the power used to suppress it will increase."

The government began to exert more and more pressure on network reporters to "go along with the party line" on war dispatches. Such pressure was usually indirect and couched in appeals for teamwork, patriotism, and common sense understanding that were filtered through the networks' own channels to be conveyed by immediate superiors. This was not very difficult because many top broadcast officials had direct ties to the government and were actually "on the same team." Yet the pressure applied through influential company men rarely came in the form of some heavy-handed demand for the suppression of information, but usually appeared as a polite request to be more restrained, balanced, and sensitive to the possibly damaging repercussions of adverse war reports. Nevertheless, the "reasonable desire" for a more "evenhanded" approach to the news merely added to the tension that was always present between the network news departments and the profit-minded network executives who often viewed the news as an extravagant loss leader necessary merely for prestige.

In spite of the pressure from the top, all three networks presented competent but generally uninsightful war specials throughout 1965. These usually consisted of carefully balanced panel discussions between supporters of the war (such as Harvard professors Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski) and anti-war critics (usually foreign war correspondents because there were not very many homegrown critics available). In a perverse way, TV's evenhandedness in these debates served to help the anti-war cause the most because in 1965 many viewers had never heard arguments against the government's policy expressed at all. As the war intensified, though, the networks began putting more emphasis on the government's side of the story.

In response to the storm of protest over Safer's Cam Ne report, CBS, later that August, aired *Vietnam Perspective,* a series of four hour-long specials that examined several different viewpoints on the war, though it generally presented the government line as basically correct. NBC also began a weekly war program (on Sunday afternoons, hosted by Garrick Utley), *Vietnam Weekly Review,* but this was merely a well produced yet essentially meaningless review of the week's battle reports, focusing on ultimately pointless jungle skirmishes and hill assaults.



The reality of the ongoing war for those on the front lines meant constant vigilance. A converted armored personnel carrier showers flame on anti-personnel mines in January 1967. *(U.S. Army)*

Surprisingly, ABC, the network with the weakest news department, provided the best overall coverage of the war within its weekly public affairs series, *ABC Scope.* This program had run, under a variety of titles, in odd hours since 1963. Starting in February 1966, it devoted all of its time to the Vietnam War. Realizing that the weekly battle statistics were given more than enough coverage on the nightly news (they were as familiar and as meaningless to most viewers as the stock market reports), the producers of *ABC Scope* concentrated instead on one particular aspect of the war each week. Using filmed reports usually produced on location in Vietnam, they tried to make sense of the increasingly perplexing conflict. Some of the programs included: a study of the role of blacks in Vietnam (comparing the views of black militants such as Stokely Carmichael with the views of blacks doing the fighting); film of North Vietnam itself, shot by a French crew on location; and thoughtful, on-the-spot analysis by Howard K. Smith, one of the most eloquent supporters of the war. These programs offered an important perspective to the jumble of general war news available and provided the opportunity for viewers to form intelligent and informed opinions on the issue.

Nobody watched these shows. All of the Vietnam specials regularly turned up at the very bottom of the ratings charts and *ABC Scope* in particular registered the worst ratings of any network program in modern television history. In September 1965, before it changed formats to become a weekly Vietnam show, only 28% of the more than 150 ABC affiliates aired the program. By 1966, only 27 affiliates bothered to show it at all and not one ABC station in the top fifty markets carried the program at its scheduled slot in prime time (Saturday night at 10:30 P.M.). Most of the ABC stations in major cities stuck the program in some obscure corner of the weekly schedule. WABC in New York aired it Sunday afternoon at 2 P.M. WFAA in Dallas aired it Sunday morning at 9 A.M. WNAC in Boston topped them all; it aired each episode eight days after its scheduled broadcast date, at 1 A.M. Sunday morning. Viewers never complained about the ridiculous time slots because they did not care. Whether for or against the war, a majority of viewers found any coverage of Vietnam generally upsetting and they fervently avoided anything more than the short clips on the nightly news.

Keenly aware of the public's disinterest in special coverage of the Vietnam War, the networks faced the difficult policy question of how to balance the guaranteed low ratings of Vietnam specials with their unwritten obligation to adequately present such a major story. The question came to a head in early 1966 when it became necessary to decide the best way to cover the public hearings that were being held by Senator William Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee on the government's handling of the war. Fulbright had become one of the best known congressional war critics and had turned the hearings into the first high level public discussion of the real aims and ultimate goals of the Vietnam conflict. In late January he began by publicly roasting top administration witnesses such as Secretary of State Dean Rusk in days of long, tough questioning. The early sessions were briefly covered on the nightly news but, as the hearings progressed, it was clear that they deserved more extensive airtime. The event was certainly newsworthy, but in what manner would most people prefer to follow it? Live coverage of the actual testimony during the day? The familiar two-or three-minute reports on the nightly news? A special late night half-hour wrap up? A weekend special reviewing the events of the entire week, featuring a discussion panel to analyze the significant developments?

Network executives argued that live coverage preempted the most profitable part of the day and would be wasted anyway; most people interested in the hearings would not be able to watch them. As head of CBS News, Fred Friendly strongly supported blanket live coverage, feeling that the hearings were important and that TV had a responsibility to present them to the millions of viewers who would "bother" to tune in. With NBC's president and longtime supporter of extensive news coverage, Bob Kinter, recently deposed, Friendly was virtually alone among top brass in advocating complete live coverage. He grudgingly agreed to follow a compromise "day-to-day decision process" that called for live coverage on days important witnesses testified and evening highlights for the rest. Without too much trouble, both NBC and CBS followed this course in early February, but on February 10, while NBC went ahead with its planned broadcast of the testimony of George Kennan, former ambassador to Russia, CBS coverage plans were vetoed by network president Schneider. With that action, Schneider saved CBS $175,000 but lost the most respected name in contemporary TV journalism. Friendly quit CBS in protest and was replaced by the man he had succeeded in the first place, Richard Salant.

Though both CBS and NBC wound up carrying two days of hearings live the very next week, an important turning point had been reached in television's handling of the Vietnam War. Friendly's resignation marked the beginning of a swing away from extensive coverage and, while American involvement in the war rapidly increased over the next year, the number of Vietnam specials dropped sharply. Investigative reporting and discussions including advocates for "all points of view" were also downplayed. It was not worth the trouble, both internally and with the government, to follow a story viewers did not seem to want to hear about anyway. So even as the United States committed more than 100,000 additional troops to the war effort, the chief source of information on the war for most Americans became nothing more than short repetitive news clips dished out nightly at suppertime.

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1966–67 SEASON

26. Same Is the Name of the Game

VARIETY, THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY'S own weekly trade magazine, labeled 1966 and 1967 as the era of "no guts journalism" in television. Though ABC continued to produce the rarely seen *ABC Scope* and CBS offered the *CBS News Hour* in prime time, the number of documentaries based on hard news events was down drastically. For example, between September 12 and November 22, 1966, NBC broadcast only three prime time news documentaries of any sort, and ABC offered only two. The news departments at the commercial networks seemed afraid to turn out anything that might possibly provoke official displeasure or viewer indifference.

All three networks largely ignored a new round of hearings on the Vietnam War held in early 1967 by Senator William Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee. Only the noncommercial NET network gave the discussions extensive coverage, instituting a highly practical policy of presenting one-hour cutdowns of the day's live hearings for prime time viewing each night. NBC chose puff travelogue-type features such as "The Royal Palace" and "Thoroughbred." ABC featured some gung-ho material sponsored by major defense contractors such as the 3M corporation for "Our Time in Hell" (the Marines at war) and B. F. Goodrich for "War in the Skies" (with actor and retired Brigadier General James Stewart as narrator for the exploits of the Air Force in Southeast Asia). CBS came up with "The People of South Vietnam: How They Feel About the War," in which the network attempted to analyze the effects of the war in Vietnam by conducting an on-the-spot public opinion poll. Such a technique was safe, noncontroversial, and hopelessly misdirected, treating the problems facing uneducated peasant farmers in the war-torn country like political or fashion trends in middle class American suburbs.

Yet the "no guts journalism" label was not only limited to the apparent non-inflammatory policy toward the Vietnam War. The commercial networks seemed to be ignoring a wide range of controversial subjects, once again leaving NET as the only force apparently willing to produce incisive programs. On shows such as *At Issue* and *NET Journal*, the noncommercial network tackled such topics as misleading advertising, defects in American medical care, the manipulation of the press by President Johnson's administration, and overcharges levied against the poor by supermarkets, credit unions, and the phone company. Serious questions began to be raised on the integrity and independence of the commercial networks' news operations. Was the toning down of controversy deliberate? Were the networks fearful of reprisals by government and industry? Were they somehow too closely aligned to those same forces in government and industry? Or was all this just a comparative cooling off of coverage in contrast to the dramatic news events of 1963, 1964, and 1965?

In January 1966, ABC brought the discussion to a very concrete level when it announced its desire to be absorbed by International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT), one of the nation's largest communications conglomerates, and one with extensive government ties. In its petition to the FCC, the network effusively promised that the proposed merger would be a tremendous benefit to broadcasting. With the new corporate money that would be available, ABC could, for instance, expand its public affairs programming. In addition, the increased stature of the network could only help the still struggling UHF system because ABC had the greatest number of UHF affiliates. Thus, as the fortunes of ABC improved, the status of UHF would have to rise as well. At first, the commission appeared to accept all the grand promises at face value and the merger seemed destined for a quick approval. Then, unexpectedly, serious opposition from within both the FCC and the Department of Justice developed and the matter grew more complicated. Asked by the commission for a legal opinion on the case, the Justice Department pointed out that the merger would quite probably lead to some violations of the anti-trust laws and would also discourage ITT from going ahead with a backburner notion to start a new television network on its own. Within the FCC, newly appointed commissioner Nicholas Johnson put aside the traditional FCC policy of giving big business the benefit of the doubt, cut through the self-serving posturing and vague promises dished out by ABC, and stated quite bluntly that he saw the merger as motivated solely by economic self-interests that had nothing to do with better serving the public. Johnson also raised the disturbing possibility that ITT, with its extensive government war contracts, might attempt to influence the ABC news department. Though ITT pledged a three-year "hands off" policy in changing the ABC executive personnel, there were serious doubts that this would be sufficient restraint. In the course of the public hearings on the case, newspaper reporters testified that ITT had pressured their papers to kill stories considered detrimental to the proposed merger. Critics quickly pointed out that if ITT would attempt to distort the news in outlets over which it had no control, what would it do to a wholly owned subsidiary?

In spite of all the objections, the FCC voted to approve the merger by a 4 to 3 margin, twice (December 1966 and June 1967). Miffed that its warnings had been dismissed so cavalierly, the Department of Justice took the ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals, further delaying the procedure that by then had dragged through nearly two years of hearings. On January 1, 1968, ITT called off the merger, citing the extensive opposition within the government as the reason for its pullout. Some observers, however, said that the continued mediocre ratings performance by ABC had as much to do with the withdrawal as the expensive, embarrassing legal delays.

As the usual number three network, ABC was constantly searching for gimmicks to attract attention and boost its ratings. Such innovations as the second season premieres of January 1966 usually brought a brief burst of success, but the glow soon faded as people returned to their old favorites. Nonetheless, ABC's gimmicks kept the overall network race tight for a while each year and forced CBS and NBC to seriously consider the latest ABC flash and decide whether or not to adopt it for their own schedules. For the fall of 1966, ABC's strategy hinged on two stunts: First, the network moved up its fall premiere week to begin just after Labor Day, giving the shows a week's head start against the premieres on the other networks. Second, ABC slotted blockbuster films such as "Bridge on the River Kwai" for the first weeks of the new season, thereby "front loading" its new schedule with exceptionally attractive specials. The strategy worked and ABC ran away with the psychologically important first ratings period. "Bridge on the River Kwai" was especially potent and captured an impressive 60% of the audience, making it the most popular film then ever seen on television. Though ABC's ratings once again faded as the 1966–67 season progressed, another weapon had been discovered in the battle for ratings success throughout the season: hit movies.

All three networks had been pursuing a growing love affair with prime time movies since 1961, but "Bridge on the River Kwai" underscored the dramatic ratings boost a box office smash could provide in a week's competition. Even moderate box office hits could be counted on to score rather well against the more limited formats of weekly series because they were, in comparison, high-budget specials. By early 1967, each network had two nights of movies per week, leaving only Monday without a theatrical production. At the same time, the growing popularity of feature films began to alter the face of network programming in more subtle ways. Though the three other celluloid smashes of the 1966–67 season were "The Robe," "Lillies of the Field," and "PT 109," network purchases for future broadcast included such films as "Tom Jones," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," and "Never on Sunday." Even edited for television, they formed the vanguard of a movement to present more "mature" themes (usually of a sexual nature) on TV, dealing with them in a manner no regular series then dared to try. In addition, the continuing success of two-hour films offered solid evidence that the home audience would accept longer programs on a regular basis and the networks increased the number of extra-length series, which sometimes ran up to ninety minutes.

There were some drawbacks in the ratings bonanza, though. The spectacular performance by "Bridge on the River Kwai" guaranteed that the price tags on future film purchases would begin to increase substantially, because there were only so many blockbuster movies available. Facing the prospect of filling six movie slots each week, it was only natural for the networks to search for a guaranteed source of future films. Logically, the search led back to Hollywood and this resulted in the long-postponed consummation of the marriage between television and the major film studios, with NBC and Universal leading the way.

Actually, since the fall of 1962, NBC and Universal had been presenting feature length material each week with the epic Western, *The Virginian*. The ninety-minute series used a core of continuing cast members, but the extra length provided the time for both the stories and guest star performers to develop. Consequently, *The Virginian* was much closer in feel to an anthology of Western films rather than a regular Western TV series. Audiences obviously accepted feature length television shows and enjoyed seeing movies on TV. There was not much difference between a ninety-minute Western and a two-hour melodrama, so the next step was practically inevitable. NBC contracted with Universal to begin producing feature length films that were not part of a series but meant to stand on their own in the regular network movie slots, by-passing any traditional theatrical release. The first batch premiered on NBC in the fall of 1964, but failed to generate either viewer or critical enthusiasm. After more than a year, NBC and Universal came back with new films, but this time backed them with higher budgets and more elaborate publicity.

The first of these new made-for-TV movies was "Fame Is the Name of the Game," which aired on NBC's *Saturday Night at the Movies* during the Thanksgiving weekend of 1966. It was not a major motion picture event by any means. Tony Franciosa played a wise-cracking investigative reporter with a soft heart beneath his cool exterior (a role almost identical to his character in the short-lived *Valentine's Day* series) and Susan Saint James played his wise-cracking cynical gal Friday with a soft heart beneath *her* cool exterior. It was very similar to Universal's other TV productions, only with a bigger budget. Though well produced, the film was a typical TV action-adventure story with the same gimmicks, characters, and plot twists found in dozens of television series and grade B pictures. (In fact, the plot displayed a remarkable similarity to the 1949 reporter saga, "Chicago Deadline.") Nonetheless. "Fame Is the Name of the Game" stood out as a special event, a "world premiere" movie, and did very well. Three months later, the second new Universal made-for-TV film, "Doomsday Flight," topped those ratings.

"Doomsday Flight" was a much better film, a TV thriller with a clever premise and effective pacing. Written by Rod Serling, the story focused on the ever-increasing sense of hysteria among the crew members (led by Van Johnson), passengers, and ground personnel of a flight from Los Angeles to New York City upon the discovery that a bomb had been planted aboard the plane. A mad bomber (Edmund O'Brien) had hidden the device before takeoff and perversely armed it with an altitude-sensitive explosive set to detonate whenever the plane dropped below a height of 4,000 feet. Luckily, Denver, the "mile high" city (5,280 feet above sea level) was on their flight path, so … It was not Academy Award material either, but the film was certainly a cut above the average TV adventure stories of the time. The presence of Rod Serling served as an appropriate reminder that made-for-TV movies were really a combination of several familiar TV formats: drama anthology, high-budget special, feature length film, and television melodrama.

Both "Fame Is the Name of the Game" and "Doomsday Flight" turned up among the ten most popular films on TV that season, assuring made-for-TV movies a firm spot in plans for the future by all three networks. NBC was happy with new material from an old friend and Universal, in turn, was pleased to have the jump on its

FALL 1966 SCHEDULE

		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
MON	ABC	local	IRON HORSE		THE RAT PATROL	FELONY SQUAD	Peyton Place	The Big Valley	
	CBS	local	Gilligan's Island	RUN, BUDDY, RUN	The Lucy Show	Andy Griffith Show	FAMILY AFFAIR	JEAN ARTHUR SHOW	I've Got A Secret
	NBC	local	THE MONKEES	I Dream Of Jeannie	ROGER MILLER SHOW	THE ROAD WEST # Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall		Run For Your Life	
TUE	ABC	local	Combat!		THE ROUNDERS	THE PRUITTS OF SOUTHAMPTON	LOVE ON A ROOFTOP	The Fugitive	
	CBS	local	Daktari		Red Skelton Hour		Petticoat Junction	CBS News Hour	
	NBC	local	THE GIRL FROM U.N.C.L.E.		OCCASIONAL WIFE	NBC Tuesday Night At The Movies			
WED	ABC	local	Batman	THE MONROES		THE MAN WHO NEVER WAS	Peyton Place	ABC STAGE '67	
	CBS	local	Lost In Space		The Beverly Hillbillies	Green Acres	Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.	Danny Kaye Show	
	NBC	local	The Virginian			Bob Hope Presents The Chrysler Theater # Bob Hope Show		I Spy	
THR	ABC	local	Batman	F Troop	TAMMY GRIMES SHOW	Bewitched	THAT GIRL	HAWK	
	CBS	local	JERICHO		My Three Sons	CBS Thursday Night Movies			
	NBC	local	Daniel Boone		STAR TREK		THE HERO	Dean Martin Show	
FRI	ABC	local	THE GREEN HORNET	THE TIME TUNNEL		MILTON BERLE SHOW		Twelve O'Clock High	
	CBS	local	The Wild, Wild West		Hogan's Heroes	CBS FRIDAY NIGHT MOVIES			
	NBC	local	TARZAN		The Man From U.N.C.L.E.		T.H.E. CAT	Laredo	
SAT	ABC	local	SHANE		Lawrence Welk Show		Hollywood Palace		ABC Scope
	CBS	local	Jackie Gleason Show		PISTOLS 'N' PETTICOATS	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE		Gunsmoke	
	NBC	local	Flipper	Please Don't Eat The Daisies	Get Smart	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies			
SUN	ABC	Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea		The FBI		The ABC Sunday Night Movie			
	CBS	Lassie	IT'S ABOUT TIME	Ed Sullivan Show		Garry Moore Show		Candid Camera	What's My Line
	NBC	Bell Telephone Hour NBC News Sp. (fr. 6:30)	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		HEY LANDLORD	Bonanza		Andy Williams Show	

competition in a lucrative new market. Viewers, too, were treated to something special that was, at the same time, very familiar. By the end of the decade, with popular TV movies as a base, Universal became one of the most important individual sources of prime time material on television. Its high percentage of programs on the networks marked the ironic triumph of the Hollywood studios over the upstart television and assured viewers a never-ending flow of standard West Coast productions.

While NBC was experimenting with feature length made-for-TV movie specials, ABC launched its own showcase for special programming, *ABC Stage '67*. This series was considerably more ambitious than NBC's movies, embracing the spirit of Pat Weaver's mixed-bag spectaculars of the 1950s. Under producer Hubbell Robinson, *ABC Stage '67* presented a one-hour drama, comedy, variety, or documentary program each week. The opening episode, "The Love Song of Barney Kempinsky," was a comedy with Alan Arkin (fresh from his comic lead in the hit movie "The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming") as a scheming, amoral New Yorker trying to raise money by any means possible for his vacation. In the field of drama, Truman Capote wrote and narrated a recreation of his youth in Alabama, "A Christmas Memory." Former comedy writer Dick Cavett presided over a variety format, "Where It's At," a schizophrenic mix of songs, standard jokes, dance, and parody. Documentaries stuck to safe topics such as the death of Marilyn Monroe and the wit of John Kennedy.

Nonetheless, ABC's attempt to revive the one-hour anthology structure with *ABC Stage '67* failed. Critics, perhaps secretly hoping for a program totally dedicated to serious drama (Bob Hope's *Chrysler Theater* hardly qualified), were only lukewarm in their support of the unpredictable anthology approach that was as likely to showcase Rick Nelson as William Shakespeare. More important, though, *ABC Stage '67* was crippled at birth by the network affiliates, many of which did not bother to carry the program at all, fearing that it was too "highbrow." It was almost mathematically impossible for a show to become a ratings hit unless at least 90% of the television audience could tune in. With so many local defections, *ABC Stage '67* came in well below the 90% mark and was doomed before its first telecast. Slotted against the very popular *Danny Kaye Show* and *I Spy*, the program was gone within a year. As Pat Weaver had discovered with his spectaculars the decade before, the format demanded patience, fine-tuning, and gradual viewer acceptance, as well as entertaining material. Eventually his spectaculars clicked in such triumphant broadcasts as "Peter Pan." ABC, too, would prosper with the format, but not until the early 1970s when it packaged the eclectic mix in the more accessible made-for-TV movie setting.

Pat Weaver himself was back in network television on CBS (following an aborted pay television venture in California and an ill-conceived attempt at a fourth network) as executive producer for the revived Garry Moore show. Moore, returning to TV after a two-year absence, was set in a format identical to his successful, long-running variety show of the early 1960s: music, sketches, and a fresh family of supporting players including Durward Kirby, Jackie Vernon, John Byner, Chuck McCann, Lily Tomlin, and Ron Carey. The program was fairly good, but it failed to make a dent in the ratings of its competition, the number one show on television, *Bonanza*. CBS brass, eager for instant success, refused to give the show time to build a following and instead, in November, they fired the supporting players and replaced Weaver. A new format, in which Moore presented tired retreads of old Broadway musical comedies such as "High Button Shoes," was an even bigger flop and the program was axed in January.

To replace the veteran Moore, CBS brought in a pair of young comics who had failed in a situation comedy the previous season, the Smothers Brothers. Tom and Dick Smothers were successful nightclub performers and recording artists who had been given a dumb permutation of *My Favorite Martian* to work with in their 1965–66 sitcom. Tom played Dick's dead brother (lost at sea) who returned to Earth as an inept apprentice angel assigned to aid people in trouble. Even before the show's premiere, CBS wanted to scrap the silly sitcom and use the pair to host a half-hour youth-oriented comedy-variety program instead, but the sponsor owned the program and refused to change formats. *The Smothers Brothers Show* opened to strong ratings, then collapsed. To CBS, this was proof that viewers liked the Smothers Brothers but could not stand the nonsense premise. The network canceled their sitcom but planned to use them in the variety format as soon as possible. The rapid demise of Garry Moore provided the opportune, though unenviable, slot: against number one *Bonanza*.

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour began as a very traditional comedy-variety show that just happened to be geared to younger viewers. The team's laid-back style was first described as similar to Dean Martin's: casual to the point of apparent sloppiness, but masking a very deliberate, controlled approach to comedy. They were the fresh new kids of television, bringing along youth-oriented acts such as Harry Nilsson, The Doors, The Who, Mason Williams, and John Hartford, and it was expected that they would slowly build a strong young audience as a base while continuing the variety show traditions of such veterans as Danny Kaye, Red Skelton, and even the recently departed Garry Moore. The unassuming Smothers surprised everyone. Within a few weeks of their February premiere they had drawn away enough viewers to knock *Bonanza* out of the number one slot. A large number of youthful viewers who normally stayed away from variety shows tuned in to catch the Smothers Brothers. Almost immediately the Smothers demanded, and received, more latitude in the show and began to adopt a decidedly controversial, anti-establishment, politically topical tone that was appropriate to the new audience but quite different from anything else on television. It turned into the closest thing to satire on American TV since *That Was The Week That Was* but, unlike *TW3, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* was a ratings smash.

Tom and Dick had built their routines on their never-ending sibling rivalry and personal caricatures: Tom was the "dumb" one and Dick was his level-headed, understanding brother. Their monologues had always consisted of Dick trying to straighten out one of Tom's misconceptions, but the source of Tom's confusion now began to shift from family frustrations ("Mom always liked you best!") to the government's war policies. Though Dick would eventually "set the record straight," it was clear that Tom's foolish misunderstandings were considered closer to the truth. Supporting cast members Bob Einstein and Pat Paulsen provided additional digs at authority figures through their own deadpan exaggerations. Einstein played a narrow-minded, atonal Los Angeles policeman, Officer Judy, who sauntered on stage whenever the barbs against lawful authority went too far, and callously warned the Smothers that they were under suspicion, arrest, or both for violating some rule of society, usually "abusing" the privilege of free speech. Paulsen mocked much of the foolishness that passed for public debate by solemnly backing absurd notions and supporting familiar issues with ridiculous arguments, usually in the form of program "editorials." He assumed everyone, including himself, was a deliberate liar and not to be trusted; he often paused momentarily and gave a sly smile over particularly blatant distortions in his speeches.

CBS did not quietly accept everything the Smothers wished to present, hit show or not. The network allowed the rarely seen Pete Seeger to appear on the program, but cut out the performance of his new song, "Waist Deep in Big Muddy," a thinly veiled criticism of President Johnson and his Vietnam War policy. Though the Smothers were very angry, they could not do anything about this particular decision. Nevertheless, they continued to stretch the limits of their expression at every opportunity and slowly developed a strong adversary relationship with CBS. The Smothers were not certain how far they could push their own network, but it seemed that as long as they continued to be funny and successful, they were safe.

In contrast to the new ground being broken by the Smothers Brothers in comedy-variety, the new situation comedies had slipped back into the same well-worn plots, gags, and themes of the early 1960s. More than a dozen new sitcoms premiered in the fall of 1966 and many, such as *Pistols 'n' Petticoats, It's About Time,* and *The Tammy Grimes Show,* were still in the grip of the mindless escapist philosophy of humor. They were worlds apart from the Smothers Brothers and even the clever sitcom parodies of the previous season.

The most popular new sitcom was CBS's *Family Affair,* which featured the tried-and-true formula of a bachelor father adopting and raising orphaned children, setting it in an upscale Manhattan apartment. Brian Keith played father figure Bill Davis (their uncle, actually), and Sebastian Cabot was his manservant, French. While a predictable format, the two portrayed refreshingly believable level-headed adults who made mistakes, yelled, and were sometimes baffled by the process of raising fifteen-year-old Cissy (Kathy Garver) and six-year-old twins Buffy (Anissa Jones) and Jody (Johnnie Whitaker). Davis, a construction company executive, enjoyed a life apart from his new-found family, and French, despite proper huffing and puffing, grew to love his new charges. Reflecting their Fifth Avenue environment, the children emerged more like an adult's view of the perfect child: sweet, heartwarming, and innocently articulate. Producer Don Fedderson repeated a technique he used with Fred MacMurray on *My Three Sons* and shot all of Brian Keith's scenes in two production windows, returning with the rest of the cast to complete each episode. This gave Keith maximum flexibility in scheduling theatrical feature film work. Though interchangeably formulaic, *Family Affair* had its heart in the right place. CBS seemed to acknowledge that the show was geared to a grown-up's fantasy of family life by slotting it rather late in the evening (9:30 P.M.).

Family Affair was the latest example of CBS's continued reliance on traditionalist sitcoms that had kept the network number one, in spite of momentary spurts by the competition, for more than a decade. In the 1966–67 season, CBS had fifteen thirty-minute situation comedies on its schedule and, though many of the shows were beginning to age, the network saw no reason to abandon an approach that still worked well. Even if most of the

September 17, 1966
Mission: Impossible. (CBS). Producer Bruce Geller turns out an action-packed formula espionage show. Each week, an "impossible missions" force (led by Steven Hill as Daniel Briggs the first season and thereafter by Peter Graves as Jim Phelps) tackles a covert operation too sensitive for even the CIA.

September 17, 1966
Jackie Gleason revives the Honeymooners skit in his variety show, bringing back partner Art Carney as Norton and casting Sheila MacRae in the role of Alice Kramden.

October 17, 1966
The Hollywood Squares. (NBC). Peter Marshall hosts a daytime game show that places nine celebrities in a three-level tic-tac-toe seating formation.

January 9, 1967
ABC at last extends its nightly news to thirty minutes and begins televising the show in color.

January 9, 1967
Mr. Terrific. (CBS). and *Captain Nice.* (NBC). Two virtually identical *Superman* takeoffs appear on the same night, one after the other. Both feature mild mannered heroes played strictly for laughs, but neither catches on.

January 15, 1967
"Super Bowl I." (CBS & NBC). The titans of television and professional football clash, with the CBS-NFL combination easily beating the NBC-AFL challenge. The Green Bay Packers outscore the Kansas City Chiefs 35 to 10, and CBS tops NBC in the Nielsen ratings, 24.6 to 17.4. Beginning with the second Super Bowl, the two networks will take turns each season carrying the game.

new comedies did not catch on, the veterans would stay on top until the right successors could be found.

ABC and NBC were also top-heavy in sitcoms, launching ten new comedies of their own that season. A small number of these broke away from the focus of most situation comedies of the past: middle age, middle class families, with preteen or just-teen children. Instead, they attempted to portray an age group usually left out of the equation completely: young adults, some without any children at all!

NBC's most obvious attempt to reach the youth market came in the form of a comedy about a group of struggling rock musicians, *The Monkees.* Michael Nesmith, Micky Dolenz, Davy Jones, and Peter Tork were cast as surrogate Beatles to act and sing amid the thinnest of plots. Most stories were simple, exaggerated melodramas usually carried by a handful of mildly clever camera tricks and special effects. Director Jim Frawley won an Emmy for his work in the show, often borrowing techniques used in the obvious models for the series, the Beatles' own films "A Hard Day's Night" (1964) and "Help!" (1965). While particular segments in the program were quite funny, the most talked about aspect of the series was its effectiveness as a promotional tool for rock music. Each episode was, in effect, a half-hour plug for the Monkees' latest disc and their TV image as rock stars became self-fulfilling. Throughout the two-year prime time run of the series, they produced an unbroken string of top ten singles and albums, outselling even the Beatles. When the series ended in 1968, though, their fortunes took an immediate nosedive and the group soon split up. The brief, but intense, success of *The Monkees* was still a minor breakthrough for youth-oriented sitcoms. Even though it was mass consumption TV at its most blatant and commercial, *The Monkees* was the first youth sitcom to directly tap the ever-growing rock'n'roll generation. The comedy was often just traditional slapstick, but the very premise and tempo of the show were a dramatic contrast to the sub-juvenile plodding of such programs as the prehistoric time travel setting of *It's About Time* and the much-visited but still uncharted desert island of *Gilligan's Island.*

ABC presented the best of the emerging new style of young adult sitcoms with *Love on a Rooftop,* which depicted the first year struggles of young marrieds Julie and Dave Willis. The program featured an excellent mix of personalities with a fine sense of comedy: Judy Carne, as Julie, played her character as a 1960s variation of Lucy, slightly wacky but also intelligent and level-headed. Julie was the daughter of a wealthy car salesman but she gave up her life of luxury to marry Dave (Peter Duel), a young apprentice architect. Duel portrayed the husband as a likable average guy (real world average, not TV average) who was good looking (but not handsome) and funny (without resorting to cheap slapstick). He just wished that Julie's rich dad (Herbert Voland) would believe that the couple could be happy with his minuscule salary and their tiny rooftop apartment, because they were in love. Rich Little, as their downstairs neighbor, offered his personal support that alternately helped and further complicated the couple's lives. *Love on a Rooftop* stood apart from the childish humor of rural escapist fare and the exaggerated farce of larger-than-life spoofs. It delivered very human, very funny characters in mildly realistic situations that many young adults could identify with. In doing so, the program was years ahead of its time. The series was also totally eclipsed in the ratings by the more familiar competition of NBC's movies and CBS's *Petticoat Junction.* ABC brought the series back five years later for a brief summer rerun and it weathered the test of time well.

Love on a Rooftop might have been the best of the young adult comedies, but *That Girl* was the most successful. Marlo Thomas (Danny's daughter), who had played a stage struck young girl in *The Joey Bishop Show* five years before, played Ann Marie, a stage struck young woman determined to break into showbiz and become an actress. In order to support her single life in New York City, she assumed different odd jobs while searching for that lucky break. A young single working woman trying to fulfill a personal dream offered marvelous possibilities though there were rarely adequately exploited in this series.

Several elements in the stories undercut the premise. For easy laughs, the writers frequently included slapstick scenes that not only shattered the mood and motivation, but also did not work because Thomas was no Lucille Ball and broad physical humor was not her strength. Ted Bessell played her boyfriend, Don Hollinger, as the epitome of the sexless, dumb males that had populated sitcoms in the 1950s and his character further tarnished Ann Marie's credibility. Worst of all, the series paid only lip service to the premise of an intelligent working woman. Ann Marie was too much the TV textbook daffy woman who succeeded in spite of herself. If Ann was a sharp, sensitive woman who relied on her wits and self-motivation to survive, the scripts hid those qualities very well. Instead, *That Girl* relied on Thomas to carry the show as a safe heart-tug comedy set in the comfortable myths of idealized television romance, with an all-American sweetheart at the center. In this guise, it lasted five seasons. Even though *That Girl* compromised an innovative premise, its success and its touted image demonstrated that a different type of sitcom *could* work.

ABC, NBC, and even CBS soon began tinkering with a slant toward young adults and more realistic settings, but it would not take hold until early in the next decade.

Another concept that would not reach mass acceptance until the 1970s was the peculiar science fiction brainchild of producer Gene Roddenberry, *Star Trek.* Roddenberry had worked on undistinguished series since the mid-1950s, including an obscure Western in 1960, *Wrangler* (as a writer), and a competent military career drama in 1963, *The Lieutenant* (as its producer). In 1964 he turned his attention from the trials and tribulations of young Marines to a more imaginative project he had been toying with for years, a science fiction show. Science fiction had never been handled very well by television, which treated it either as strictly kid stuff such as *Captain Video, Tom Corbett, Space Cadet,* and *Rod Brown of the Rocket Rangers* or in pedantic anthologies such as *Science Fiction Theater, Men into Space,* and *Tales of Tomorrow.* Classier anthologies such as *The Twilight Zone* captured the audience's fancy for a while but suffered from a lack of identifiable continuing characters. In 1963, while Roddenberry was still busy with *The Lieutenant,* ABC launched *The Outer Limits,* a series with substantially better writing than most previous science fiction programs, but it was still mired in the anthology format and it placed too strong an emphasis on frightening, unearthly creatures (bug-eyed monsters). Roddenberry envisioned his project as something different; he called it a "*Wagon Train* to the stars." A small central cast, always on the move, would encounter people with problems (the weekly guest stars) and attempt to resolve them. This was a simple format that had worked well in series such as *Wagon Train, Route 66, The Virginian,* and *The Fugitive.* The only difference was that *Star Trek* would take place in outer space.

By presenting his proposed science fiction show as a saleable adventure series with continuing characters and a slightly different, but exciting, locale, Roddenberry made it easier for the networks to overcome their preconceived notions of science fiction formats as kid stuff and consider the series on its own merits. In April 1964, the Desilu studios agreed to work on the project and CBS began making favorable noises. The network, though, instead decided to stay with science fiction as children's fare and took on Irwin Allen's *Lost in Space* (an average American suburban family of the future launched into the cosmos, but hopelessly lost soon after take-off). Undaunted, Roddenberry continued work on his program and in December 1964 a one-hour *Star Trek* pilot episode ("The Cage") was completed. It featured Jeffrey Hunter as Christopher Pike, captain of the starship *Enterprise,* and Leonard Nimoy as his chief assistant, Spock, an alien from the planet Vulcan with dark raised eyebrows and pointed ears. They encountered an alien race, humanoid in appearance, with the ability to project illusions so strong that they seemed real. Pike discovered how to sort the truth from illusion, learned the aliens' master plan, and escaped from their planet. NBC expressed interest in the concept, looked at and liked the pilot, but still had some reservations about the series, specifically the cerebral subject matter and the casting. The network was especially bothered by the presentation of the captain's chief assistant as a pointy-eared alien. NBC was sufficiently intrigued with the premise, however, to ask for another pilot, a second shot few producers ever received. Roddenberry took no chances with the new pilot, making the conflicts more obvious and using an almost entirely new cast. William Shatner (who had been playing in the unsuccessful CBS lawyer series *For the People* when the first pilot had been filmed) was recruited as the new captain of the *Enterprise,* James T. Kirk. Leonard Nimoy was kept on as Spock, with his ears intact but the eyebrows softened. Roddenberry finished his revised pilot episode ("Where No Man Has Gone Before") in November 1965 and presented it to NBC. This time, the network gave him the go-ahead to begin production, setting the series premiere for the fall of 1966.

Actually, Roddenberry had veered somewhat from his promised "*Wagon Train* to the stars" in "The Cage." The story *had* been a bit "too cerebral," especially for a pilot. With the series in production, though, he set out to prove that science fiction could be accessible, entertaining, and a limitless source of continuing adventures. He imposed strict standards on himself and his production crew, determined to avoid the pitfalls of past TV science fiction ventures by presenting a well thought out, orderly universe for his characters. He had made a very good start in the pilot episodes by eliminating the usual space adventure hardware: space suits, landing craft, and launching pads.

The *Enterprise* had been assembled in space and was not designed to ever land on any planet (gravity and heat friction would have destroyed it), so the ship merely locked into orbit each week around some new planet. This replaced boring and repetitious lift-off sequences with brief, attractive shots of the ship circling a colorful new world. Kirk and his crew were also assigned to visit only class "M" type planets, those with an atmosphere and inhabitants not very different from Earth. This eliminated bulky space suits and also kept the number of weirdly shaped aliens to a minimum. To transport members of the crew from the spaceship to the planet's surface, some mumbo jumbo

April 17, 1967
The Joey Bishop Show. (ABC). Making a return to late night television, ABC teams *Tonight*'s regular substitute host, Joey Bishop, and former California talk show host Regis Philbin for a familiar Monday through Friday desk-and-sofa show. Bishop's first words, after the applause dies down: "Are the ratings out yet?"

May 1, 1967
The Las Vegas Show. (United Network). The one-and-only offering in an unsuccessful attempt to launch a fourth commercial network. Bill Dana hosts a late night celebrity talk show that, like the proto-network, lasts only one month.

June 25, 1967
"Our World." (NET). The first truly world-wide television show, consisting of live broadcasts from twenty-six countries on five continents, including a Beatles recording session in London for "All You Need Is Love."

August 27, 1967
After six years as a first run prime time series, two years as a rerun in prime time, three summers as a warm weather prime time fill-in, eight years as a Monday through Friday daytime rerun, two years as a weekend afternoon rerun, and one year as a Saturday morning rerun, *I Love Lucy* is taken off CBS and put into local syndication where it begins rerunning all over again.

August 29, 1967
The Fugitive. (ABC). The day the running stops.

September 3, 1967
What's My Line? ends 17½ years on CBS. The final "mystery guest" is the show's moderator, John Charles Daly.

about instantaneous matter transfer was devised and an ingenious special effect was used to avoid cumbersome landing vehicles. A landing party would simply stand in the "transporter" device and, within a matter of seconds, their atoms would be broken down, sent to the planet's surface via radio waves, and reassembled with no ill effect. Besides breaking away from the traditional approach to interplanetary exploration, there was a very practical reason for these innovations: money. Weird aliens, space suits, landing gear, and associated hardware involved steep costs in makeup, design, and construction. The technical process used in the transporter sequences was the most expensive continuing device, but it was a bargain compared to the alternative costs. Roddenberry realized that viewers would not be tuning in for a guide to twenty-third-century hardware, so he did not spend much time explaining them in any great detail. Warp drive engines were just like steam engines; overworked they would overheat and explode. Machines were machines, circuits were circuits, weapons were weapons. They broke down, overloaded, and misfired. The technical details did not matter. Roddenberry focused his energies instead on telling the story.

He quite firmly dismissed a frequent trash can device of hack science fiction: the unexplained mystery of the future. All too often such stories presented the universe of the future as filled with temperamental villains, heroes who could single-handedly overcome astounding odds, and technical innovations that violated all laws of twentieth-century mechanics. To Roddenberry, it did not matter that the show took place several hundred years in the future; the audience existed in the present, so everything that happened in *Star Trek* took place for a reason. Aliens required a reason to attack the *Enterprise.* Planets were saved or destroyed for a reason. If the captain and crew embarked on a particular mission, there had to be a reason. The lack of distracting technical gear and jargon, as well as the strict adherence to understandable motivation for each conflict and action, gave the writers and performers the comfortable setting necessary for a solid, dramatic story.

Star Trek operated under the premise that, in the twenty-third century, human nature remained unchanged, even though technological breakthroughs of astounding scope had taken place. Consequently, the outer galaxy appeared no more foreign than a World War II battalion headquarters or a frontier outpost in the American West of the 1880s. In this tradition, Kirk's immediate supporting crew was a perfect blend of racial and ethnic personalities: a young and impetuous Russian navigator, Ensign Pavel Chekov (Walter Koenig); a two-fisted drinker from the Highlands, Lieutenant Commander Montgomery "Scotty" Scott (James Doohan); a beautiful Nubian communications officer, Lieutenant Uhura (Nichelle Nichols); and the efficient, soft-spoken Asian navigator, Sulu (George Takei).

Kirk stood at the helm, a handsome American man of action, respected by his enemies and loved from afar by women throughout the galaxy. His first love, of course, was the *Enterprise.* Shatner brought just enough lightness and humor to his portrayal of the strong commanding officer to save himself from the horrid clichés inherent in the role. As captain, he constantly faced decisions that required a choice between humanism and official procedure and his two top aides, science officer Spock (Nimoy) and chief medical officer Doctor Leonard "Bones" McCoy (De Forest Kelley) personified his inner struggle. Spock was half Earthling and half Vulcan (an alien race motivated totally by logic), and he calmly analyzed situations based on facts and precedent. He wasn't a cold computer (his human side certainly prevented that), but he would not allow normal human emotions to determine his decisions. On the other hand, McCoy was a country boy from Georgia who put his faith in intuition and man's fallible but essentially generous nature above all rules, logic, and analysis. People came first. Spock and McCoy were constantly at odds with each other, but together they formed a perfect advisor to Kirk as he dealt with each new situation by weighing the two usually conflicting points of view.

By stripping away the peripheral traits of science fiction that other TV presentations had concentrated on, Roddenberry opened up *Star Trek* to the best strain of the sci-fi genre: speculative, symbolic stories. In the guise of an alien setting, *Star Trek* could deal with real twentieth-century Earth problems such as racial antagonism, uncontrolled war, systematic cultural domination, and individual freedom, while not appearing heavy-handed, obvious, or dated. Problems facing humanoid creatures in the far flung future and on distant planets were not as threatening or offensive to people as the same stories in a contemporary setting. The stories became timeless studies of human struggles, often based on familiar folk tales, Biblical stories, and even classical literature. For instance, one of the continuing themes that ran through many *Star Trek* plots was the necessity of a free will and the dangerous illusion of paradise. Though Kirk and his crew usually accepted the fact that each civilization had its own unique style, they were profoundly suspicious of so-called "Garden of Eden" planets and deeply disturbed by any force (man or machine, oppressive or benign) that systematically denied its people the right to exercise their free will. Systems that combined paradise with the removal of all complications and conflict were presented as the most tyrannical of all. Freedom without hard choices and responsibility turned a blissful paradise into a very pretty prison. No matter what the theme, however, the scripts were superbly executed. The energy of the cast usually managed to overcome occasional rough spots in the dialogue and plots, and *Star Trek* attained the high standards Roddenberry had set for it.

Unfortunately, the program's ratings never matched this level of artistic success. They were adequate, but never outstanding. NBC tried to cancel the program after the second season, but an outpouring of viewer support won the series a third go-round. This turned out to be merely a brief reprieve and, following the third season, *Star Trek* was canceled, after airing seventy-nine episodes.

Like many other network series, *Star Trek* was put into syndication soon after its axing. Unlike nearly every other syndicated series, *Star Trek* became more popular in off network repeats than in its network run. Most series actually needed a good syndication stint to turn a profit (the network run usually only paid for initial production costs), but *Star Trek* went beyond this. Its popularity steadily increased throughout the 1970s and by 1979, ten years after its cancellation, the continued public interest in the program moved Paramount studios to reassemble the entire cast for the first of a series of feature-length theatrical films. Not since *The Honeymooners* had any series achieved such success so long after it had been dismissed by the networks as past its peak. The themes, production, and characters remained popular long after the "five year mission" of the *Enterprise* had run out.

With *Star Trek, ABC Stage '67, Love on a Rooftop,* and the Smothers Brothers, the 1966–67 season was filled with new shows that were slightly ahead of their time. Appropriately, one of the season's dramatic highlights was the conclusion of a four-year-old series that had once been ahead of *its* time, Quinn Martin's *The Fugitive.* It was an amicable cancellation as Martin, ABC, and lead David Janssen all agreed that, while a fifth season might still be profitable, it was time to move on. As part of that wrap-up, though, *The Fugitive* production team planned on resolving the conflicts and questions viewers had been following for more than three years. The final *Fugitive* story would truly conclude the series. This was a departure from the approach taken by any previous U.S. drama series.

To that point, the last episode of a typical series carried no special story-telling import, although the production might have incorporated quiet nods to its impending wrap-up. The May 1966 final episode of *Perry Mason,* for example, ended nine seasons with the in-joke title "The Case of the Final Fade Out" and had included cameos from behind-the-scenes personnel, most notably Perry Mason creator Erle Stanley Gardner as a judge. For any series, the last episode was simply the end point in a production cycle designed to slip into the next step: rerun syndication during which any episode could play any time.

From the beginning, the story-telling arc of *The Fugitive* was different. It had a subtle but essential departure from the standard series structure. Even with more than one hundred individual episodes, at heart *The Fugitive* really came down to just one story: a desperate man's pursuit of life-saving vindication. Approaching the end, there were still unanswered questions central to this quest: Who really killed Richard Kimble's wife that fateful night? What was the role of the one-armed man? What would happen if/when Lieutenant Gerard captured Kimble? And most important: Would Richard Kimble establish his innocence and end his lonely flight?

To audiences, this overarching narrative of a character they had pulled for over time demanded closure.

On the network side, the ratings success of the series had always been welcome, but the audience interest in Kimble's fate led to some puzzled internal company discussion. Leonard Goldberg, then ABC's head of programming (later a television and film producer), had been a supporter of the series from its initial pitch by Roy Huggins. Goldberg later looked back (in an Archive of American Television interview) at the reaction to the proposed series finale by the network's executives, who could not imagine that an average viewer actually cared about a fictional character narrative. Nonetheless, with sponsor support secured, ABC brass agreed to his programming plan.

Throughout the spring of 1967, a well-coordinated publicity drive built up suspense over the closed filming sessions for the program's finale. The two-part episode ("The Judgment") was held in secrecy until August, after the full cycle of summer reruns had played. No details were given out prior to air time. No reviewers were allowed to prescreen the show.

Part one provided the setup. Police in Los Angeles captured Fred Johnson (Bill Raisch), the one-armed man, and Lieutenant Gerard (Barry Morse) knew the publicity would draw Kimble to the area, so he set a trap. Throughout the episode, spurious clues suggested that perhaps the one-armed man was really innocent and that someone else had committed the murder. For seven days the world waited as viewers speculated on the guilty party: Perhaps a neighbor, perhaps Gerard, or perhaps even Kimble himself after all.

On August 29, the final episode aired, staggeringly capturing more than 70% of the American viewing audience. Such a huge viewer response vindicated Goldberg's trust in the audience's interest in the program and its story lines, and it was the most-watched program of the decade. No show would top the finale's ratings for another thirteen years.

In the final episode, the one-armed man managed to escape police custody, only to be pursued by Kimble and Gerard. At the conclusion of a dramatic chase through a closed amusement park, Kimble and the one-armed man both climbed a high tower where the two stood face-to-face, alone. With nowhere else for either man to run, the one-armed man confessed his guilt, but then lunged, determined to kill Kimble. Back on the ground, Gerard, armed with a high-powered rifle, looked up and faced an agonizing choice. He then shot the one-armed man, saving Kimble's life. Only this apparently left Kimble in worse shape than before. No one else had heard the confession, the killer was dead, and Dr. Kimble was now back in the hands of the law, a doomed man. Then, shamefully, a chicken-hearted neighbor who had seen the murder take place stepped forward. He had fearfully kept silent for deeply personal reasons over the years, even as he watched Richard Kimble receive a death sentence. Now, given a second chance, he offered to do the right thing and testify.

Kimble was exonerated. The final scene showed a triumphant Dr. Kimble leaving the courthouse a free man, accompanied by his new good-looking girlfriend. Narrator William Conrad religiously intoned, "Tuesday, August 29th. The day the running stopped." Real police departments broadcast orders to end the search for both Kimble and the one-armed man. For both men, the running was over. Richard Kimble had found peace at last. Justice and freedom had finally triumphed, at least on television.

There was, however, a postscript. Later that night, on ABC's late night talk show hosted by Joey Bishop, there was a live interview with David Janssen, who was working in Georgia on a new movie. Bishop asked Janssen whether he had anything to say now that he was a free man and beyond the reach of the law. "Yes," Janssen said. "I killed her, Joey. She talked too much."

1967–68 SEASON

27. The Whole World Is Watching

IN THE FALL OF 1967, TV'S TOP TEN LIST included such venerables as Red Skelton, Ed Sullivan, Jackie Gleason, Lucille Ball, Andy Griffith, *Bonanza, Gunsmoke,* and *The Beverly Hillbillies.* Most had been around for over a decade, some nearly twenty years. Though still popular, they could not last forever. Yet programmers were having trouble coming up with a formula to produce durable new replacements and the only bona-fide hits that had emerged from the previous season's new shows were the very traditional *Family Affair,* a revival of *Dragnet,* and the youth-oriented *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour.* For the 1967–68 season premieres, the networks included a nod to the young adult audience, but for the most part continued to emphasize familiar TV veterans in new but very safe and predictable variety, sitcom, crime, and Western vehicles. Viewers were generally unexcited by it all and, after the flurry of fall premieres passed, they turned back to their old favorites. Though a number of the new shows eventually caught on, none of them became an instant smash. By Christmas, the bucolic saga of *Gentle Ben* (a lovable bear in a Florida game preserve) was the only new program in the top twenty.

As part of the second season revamping in January, another new variety show appeared, hosted by a pair of very familiar showbiz veterans, Dan Rowan and Dick Martin. For years, the two had brought their straightforward routines to numerous traditional comedy-variety shows and, in the summer of 1966, had served as competent hosts to one of Dean Martin's summer replacement series. They were unlikely candidates to be pioneers in a new wave of television comedy, yet their new show was truly different. Within four months, *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* exploded into a national hit, bringing to mass popularity the innovative television comedy techniques developed years before by Ernie Kovacs.

In the early 1960s, Kovacs had put together a monthly comedy program for ABC in which he replaced the traditional comedy-variety structure with bizarre visuals, off-the-wall sketches, and short unconnected bits (blackouts). The program had fallen short of its innovative premise, though, because Kovacs had been severely limited by a minuscule budget. In 1967, producer George Schlatter, armed with much more money and the latest TV technology, produced a pilot for NBC called "Laugh-In," which aired on September 9, 1967. The show reworked and updated the Kovacs approach to humor, incorporating new video tape tricks and techniques, expanding the crew of writers and performers, and providing viewers with familiar characters to guide them through the maze of images. Blackout bits in the special were edited into a frenzied, machine-gun pace. A gaggle of talented but generally unknown comedians including Ruth Buzzi, Henry Gibson, Arte Johnson, Jo Anne Worley, and Judy Carne delivered the punch lines, catch phrases, puns, and clunkers. The material went by so fast that if there were three good jokes in ten, the laughter from these blotted out the memory of the seven flops. If none of them clicked, there would soon be more flashing by anyway. All the electronic madness was held together by Rowan and Martin, who served as the essentially "square" hosts of the "Laugh-In" special. They had the very important role of anchoring the flights of fancy with their familiar presence and humor. Confounded by everything else, viewers could turn to them for reassurance.

"Laugh-In" was colorful, innovative, and far more exciting than any of the new fall shows premiering that month. When the CBS heavyweights of *Gunsmoke* and *Lucy* swamped the languishing *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* on Monday nights, NBC quickly slotted *Laugh-In* as a mid-season replacement series, though the network feared that the program's unique style might hurt acceptance. Instead, it helped. *Laugh-In*'s frantic structure, slightly risqué jokes, and many running gags set the show apart from everything else on television, injecting life into an ossified format that too often settled into the same dull routine. Viewers grew to enjoy the unexpected twists, surprise guest shots, and fresh new characters of *Laugh-In.*

On the first episode in January, Rowan and Martin introduced viewers to the unlikely figure of Tiny Tim, a singer who looked like a cross between a Bowery bum and Tinker Bell. He had a large hook nose, a death-white complexion, and an Arthur Godfrey-type ukulele that he used to accompany his high, lilting falsetto on such traditional ballads as "Tip Toe through the Tulips." Such a bizarre guest was clear evidence that *Laugh-In* was willing to break from the staid and safe traditions of TV variety shows, though even Rowan and Martin acknowledged his extreme peculiarity and turned his presence, actual or threatened, into a running gag ("You're not going to bring back Tiny Tim, are you?").

Other, more traditional, celebrities also appeared on the show, usually delivering quick one-liners in brief cameo shots. Viewers had to be alert to catch such guests as Bob Hope, Sonny Tufts, John Wayne, Zsa Zsa Gabor, and then presidential candidate Richard Nixon, who publicly pondered, "Sock it to *me*?" (the show's main punch line). Frequent guests Sammy Davis, Jr. and Flip Wilson revived the old Pigmeat Markham routine that used the hook line: "Here come de' judge."

Though the guests kept viewers on their toes, the regular cast developed the program's popular continuing bits. A weekly "cocktail party" and the many-shuttered "joke wall" served as the launching pads for timely one-liners by the entire crew, who soon became familiar figures with well-known characterizations. Arte Johnson was a dirty old man repeatedly pestering a spinsterish Ruth Buzzi; Judy Carne was a bikinied go-go dancer with pithy sayings painted on her body; Goldie Hawn was the similarly adorned dumb blonde incarnate; Henry Gibson was a poetry-spouting "flower person"; and announcer Gary Owens was an ear-cupping caricature of radio's deep-voiced announcers of the 1930s. These characters popularized a lexicon of punch lines that soon wound their way into the national language. From Johnson, who also played an unreconstructed Nazi soldier, came the intonation at the end of each show, "Verry interesting." Whenever Carne was tricked into saying "Sock it to me" she found herself hit by pies, drenched in water, or falling through a trap door. Rowan and Martin themselves added such phrases as "You bet your bippy," "the fickle finger of fate," and "beautiful downtown Burbank." After the show had been a solid hit for more than a year, some cast members moved on and a second generation of *Laugh-In* supporting players arrived including the hippy-dippy Alan Sues; the very English Richard Dawson (moonlighting from *Hogan's Heroes*); and Lily Tomlin, as the caustic, chest-scratching telephone operator, Ernestine.

Like any truly different TV show, *Laugh-In* had to overcome initial uncertainty among viewers, but once they became familiar with the program's style, they found it easy and fun to follow. In one hour, *Laugh-In* squeezed together slapstick, vaudeville, satire, clever visuals, an air of current hipness, and even a few normal guests. The program had everything the other comedy-variety shows had-just more of it, presented with fresh faces and sophisticated technical discipline. By May, *Laugh-In* was a solid top ten hit and frequently ended up the number one program on television. Its enormous popularity, along with that of *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour,* was tangible evidence that the American TV audience seemed ready for more experimental, sophisticated, and even controversial fare than had been available week in and week out over the previous decade. For still further proof, there was the continuing success of prime time movies.

Number 6 (Patrick McGoohan) makes a speech to the residents of the Village as part of his campaign for the post of Number 2 in *The Prisoner.* (*© ITC Entertainment, Inc.*)

FALL 1967 SCHEDULE

	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
MON	local	COWBOY IN AFRICA		The Rat Patrol	Felony Squad	Peyton Place	The Big Valley		ABC
	local	Gunsmoke		The Lucy Show	Andy Griffith Show	Family Affair	CAROL BURNETT SHOW		CBS
	local	The Monkees	The Man From U.N.C.L.E.		DANNY THOMAS HOUR		I Spy		NBC
TUE	local	GARRISON'S GORILLAS		The Invaders		N.Y.P.D.	Hollywood Palace		ABC
	local	Daktari		Red Skelton Hour		GOOD MORNING WORLD	CBS News Hour		CBS
	local	I Dream Of Jeannie	JERRY LEWIS SHOW		NBC Tuesday Night At The Movies				NBC
WED	local	THE LEGEND OF CUSTER		THE SECOND HUNDRED YEARS	The ABC Wednesday Night Movie				ABC
	local	Lost In Space		The Beverly Hillbillies	Green Acres	HE AND SHE	DUNDEE AND THE CULHANE		CBS
	local	The Virginian			KRAFT MUSIC HALL # Bob Hope Show		Run For Your Life		NBC
THR	local	Batman	THE FLYING NUN	Bewitched	That Girl	Peyton Place	GOOD COMPANY	local	ABC
	local	CIMARRON STRIP			CBS Thursday Night Movies				CBS
	local	Daniel Boone		IRONSIDE		Dragnet 1968	Dean Martin Show		NBC
FRI	local	OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD		HONDO		THE GUNS OF WILL SONNETT	JUDD, FOR THE DEFENSE		ABC
	local	The Wild, Wild West		Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.	CBS Friday Night Movies				CBS
	local	Tarzan		Star Trek		ACCIDENTAL FAMILY	Bell Telephone Hour NBC News Specials		NBC
SAT	local	The Dating Game	The Newlywed Game	Lawrence Welk Show		Iron Horse		ABC Scope	ABC
	local	Jackie Gleason Show		My Three Sons	Hogan's Heroes	Petticoat Junction	MANNIX		CBS
	local	MAYA		Get Smart	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies				NBC
SUN	Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea		The FBI		The ABC Sunday Night Movie				ABC
	Lassie	GENTLE BEN	Ed Sullivan Show		Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour		Mission: Impossible		CBS
	local	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		THE MOTHERS-IN-LAW	Bonanza		THE HIGH CHAPARRAL		NBC

While most of the new network series struggled near the bottom of the ratings charts, all four movie nights on CBS and NBC rested safely in the top forty. Viewers accepted and supported the more realistic, adult themes in such features as "Never on Sunday," "Tom Jones," "Splendor in the Grass," "Dr. Strangelove," and "King Rat," with such films as "The Birds," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," "The Great Escape," and "North by Northwest" racking up extremely high ratings. At mid-season, NBC decided to add a third night of movies in the fall of 1968 so that, for the first time ever, there would be a network movie every night of the week.

Yet over the entire television schedule such changes were taking place slowly, with both viewers and the networks generally moving with caution in shaking up different formats. CBS made a few moves to modernize both its image and schedule for the 1967–68 season, but met solid viewer resistance or indifference in the process. The network had attempted to cancel the oldest oater of them all, *Gunsmoke,* at the end of the 1966–67 season, but an outpouring of public support (and the direct intervention of CBS's William Paley) saved the show, though it was moved to a new early time slot (Monday at 7:30 P.M.), assumed to be an impossible position for an adult Western. Fooling everybody, *Gunsmoke* bounced back into the top ten with even higher ratings than before. However, this did not signal a revival of interest in the overall Western format and new shows such as *Custer* and *Dundee and the Culhane* quickly faded from view. At the same time, CBS hesitantly experimented in the field of situation comedy with a moderately realistic young adult show, *He and She,* but it met the same fate as ABC's *Love on a Rooftop* from the previous season.

He and She starred the real life husband and wife team of Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss, who filled admirably the roles of slightly befuddled, misunderstood husband and slightly wacky, often incomprehensible wife. Paula Prentiss's character (like Judy Carne's in *Love on a Rooftop*) was a genuine step forward in the presentation of women in sitcoms. Though slightly daffy, Paula clearly had a head on her shoulders and was not totally dependent on her husband. They had no children so she was free to pursue her own interests while he worked at his realistic, though certainly uncommon, job as a cartoonist. The two displayed a deep and genuine affection for each other so that even the usual sitcom schemes and complications seemed a reasonable part of being in love.

Besides the strong leads, *He and She* was blessed by a fantastic group of supporting players who should have made the program a smash hit on their talent alone. Former folk singer Hamilton Camp portrayed a gnomish, klutzy apartment superintendent; the venerable Harold Gould was Dick's boss; and Kenneth Mars was a thickheaded but friendly neighborhood fireman who often entered the firehouse by climbing through Dick and Paula's kitchen window. Best of the best, Jack Cassidy was Oscar North, a TV star who played Jetman, the lead character in a television series adaptation of one of Dick's cartoon heroes. Cassidy looked as if he had stepped directly from the comic page and his narcissistic, self-centered manner demonstrated that he truly believed he was a superhero. Creator and character frequently faced off, with Dick's dry drollery serving as the perfect antidote to North's insatiable appetite for self-aggrandizement. Nothing could ultimately shake the star, though, and he thrived on compliments. He instantly responded to one adoring fan's delight at meeting him with the heartfelt observation, "It was worth waiting for, wasn't it?"

He and She was given the advantageous Wednesday night slot that *Gomer Pyle* had recently held (following *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Green Acres*), but the new sitcom bombed out in the ratings and was canceled after its first season. While very similar programs such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* would catch on in another four years, *He and She,* like *Love on a Rooftop,* was guilty of being ahead of its time with a mix of realistic and satirical characters. The most successful new sitcom of the 1967–68 season featured the childish adventures of *The Flying Nun.*

With the failure of *He and She,* and the implied failure of sophisticated sitcoms in general, CBS canceled plans to develop (with American filmmakers Norman Lear and Bud Yorkin as producers) a Stateside version of the relatively daring BBC working class sitcom, *Till Death Us Do Part.* For two years that program had been both shocking and delighting the British audience as the openly bigoted Alf Garnett (Warren Mitchell) violated all known rules of TV decorum. He hurtled epithets at his wife and son-in-law, constantly dropped racial slurs, and called well-known political figures names such as "grammar school twit." Though Britons accepted this behavior in a situation comedy, CBS saw it as obviously too strong for American consumption.

One format that managed a mix of traditional characters and settings with more contemporary concerns was the cop show. With real urban crime on the public's mind and on the nightly news shows, it was often a very short step to the world of fictional police work. The TV crime revival had begun in the 1966–67 season with the return to television of the old *Dragnet* duo of Jack Webb and Ben Alexander, though they appeared in two different programs. Alexander arrived first, in the fall of 1966, with *Felony Squad* for ABC. The program was a very routine crime exercise set in Los Angeles, and its proclivity for scenes of spurting blood ("going heavy on the ketchup") was its only distinguishing feature. Jack Webb, though, made a very conscious effort to appear topical in his revival of *Dragnet* for NBC.

As producer-writer-narrator-star, Webb brought his tight-lipped "just the facts, ma'am" style of drama to a new decade, first in a successful made-for-TV movie, then as a mid-season replacement series, *Dragnet '67* (the year was added to make certain the audience knew this was no rerun). Following its spine-chilling theme song, *Dragnet* had always assured viewers that the story to follow was true and that only the names had been changed to protect the innocent, so the format was the perfect front for stories that could be consciously topical. In the first episode, Webb (as Joe Friday) and his new sidekick, Harry Morgan (as Bill Gannon), relentlessly pursued a crazed LSD pusher who died dramatically of an overdose at the end of the show. Despite the topical trappings, though, *Dragnet*'s chief strengths continued to be its painstaking methodical style and dedicated support for the average cop on the beat. Yet by focusing on crazed peaceniks and deranged dope fiends, *Dragnet* and other crime shows such as *The FBI* could pass off standard cop show material as hip, modern drama.

The mid-season success of *Dragnet* brought several new crime shows to the 1967–68 line-up. Though they reflected touches of TV topicality, the programs generally presented well produced, high quality stories and conflicts. *N.Y.P.D.* (produced by David Susskind's Talent Associates) was filmed on location in New York City and featured a black and white police duo (played by Robert Hooks and Frank Converse), but the series managed to resist any heavy-handed sociology. *Mannix* (created by Richard Levinson and William Link) cast Mike Connors in the role of the old faithful private eye. At first, the plots in the series centered on the conflict between the lone investigator and the increasingly mechanized job of crime detection. By its second season, though, *Mannix* dropped

Though *Laugh-In* and the Smothers Brothers were ushering in a new generation of comedy-variety, veterans Ed Sullivan *(center)* and Bob Hope *(right)* still remained two of television's top draws. Both received Peabody Awards in 1967, presented by Dean John E. Drewry *(left)* to honor, respectively, twenty and thirty years of broadcast success. (*Courtesy Peabody Awards Collection*)

September 14, 1967
Ironside. (NBC). One year after the end of *Perry Mason,* Raymond Burr switches sides and resumes the fight against crime in California—this time as a determined police detective. Though paralyzed from the waist down (by a would-be assassin) and confined to a wheelchair, chief Robert Ironside is always at the scene of the crime, aided by a special support team that does his legwork.

November 6, 1967
The Phil Donahue Show. Donahue, a radio newsman in Dayton, Ohio, begins an hour-long weekday television interview and call-in show there on the Avco Corporation's WLWD. In June, 1969, the program goes into national syndication.

January 1, 1968
Bob Young replaces Peter Jennings as ABC's nightly news anchor.

January 9, 1968
It Takes a Thief. (ABC). Robert Wagner stars as Alexander Mundy, an unreformed cat burglar released from prison to work for the U.S. government as an undercover agent-thief. The adventures are played tongue-in-cheek, combining the charming sophistication of the short-lived *Rogues* series with the spy shenanigans of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* Fred Astaire adds a further touch of class in the program's third season by assuming the recurring role of Alister Mundy, father of Alex and a master thief in his own right.

the computer-and-society angle and slipped into the more familiar rock'em sock'em two-fisted detective mold popular since the days of Mickey Spillane. Raymond Burr settled for a less violent gimmick premise and portrayed a disabled San Francisco police chief in the slickly produced *Ironside.* Though confined to a wheelchair by a sniper's bullet, Robert Ironside could still track down criminals and often used his dominant, snarling personality to intimidate them into surrendering.

As the urban action police shows returned in strength to television, the more fantasy-oriented world of the spies was fading. Over just a few years, the form had been hopelessly diluted in every medium: film, print, and television. For the most part, gimmicks and humor had completely supplanted the stories, character development, and dramatic confrontations. Even the granddaddy of them all, James Bond, fell victim to gimmick overkill, prompting Sean Connery's departure from the theatrical Bond role after the well-panned "You Only Live Twice." The weekly TV spy series were especially vulnerable to the constant overexposure and had practically become parodies of themselves with conflicts that could no longer be taken seriously. In Britain, where the spy craze had begun, Diana Rigg (the delectable Mrs. Peel) left TV's best spy series, *The Avengers,* and her replacement, Linda Thorson (as Tara King), adopted a more helpless demeanor that robbed the show of its dramatic tension and unique point of view. Even worse, the series was revamped so that both John Steed and Tara King lost their free-wheeling independence and were forced to report directly to Mother (Patrick Newell), an oddball superior in a wheelchair. Yet as super-sleuth TV was in its death rattle, Britain came up with one final spy masterpiece that successfully combined numerous strains of entertainment into one of the best television programs ever devised, *The Prisoner.*

Since 1960, Patrick McGoohan had been portraying secret agent John Drake (a.k.a. Danger Man) and, after seven years, Drake had been involved in almost every possible spy plot. McGoohan felt it was time to take the spy motif one step further and present some concepts that were often lurking just under the surface in the *Danger Man/Secret Agent* series. Working under heavy security wraps and backed by Sir Lew Grade's British television network conglomerate, McGoohan, acting as executive producer and star, turned out the seventeen-episode *Prisoner* series. It was the most dazzlingly produced program then on British television and also one of the most expensive, running $168,000 per episode. Such high costs for individual episodes would have been impossible to bear in the open-ended world of American television. There, producers developed ideas into series they hoped would run for years, yet faced the very real possibility of being canceled within weeks. Most British series were designed to end after a set number of weeks anyway, so the total cost of a program was much easier to project. The limited run also allowed more time to concentrate on pacing both in particular episodes and in the entire series. McGoohan constructed each segment of *The Prisoner* with the same care and complexity usually reserved for one-shot feature films and live theatrical productions. As a result, the series achieved a level of artistic success on a par with high quality literature, films, and theater.

The Prisoner took the audience from the supposedly real world of John Drake, the spy, into the symbolic world of The Village, a very pretty prison-resort in which everyone was known only by a number. McGoohan, once again portraying a government agent (similar to Drake), found himself in The Village following his abrupt resignation from the British spy service. He had planned to leave Britain (with a good deal of sensitive security information in his head) and take a soul-searching vacation, but was rendered unconscious and spirited away to the mysterious seaside village before he could finish packing. Once there, he was placed in an apartment and given his own number, Six. Number Six faced constant scrutiny and interrogation by Number Two, in charge of the day-to-day operations and security. The contest was simple: In each episode Number Two tried to discover the reason for Number Six's resignation while Number Six tried to thwart him and escape.

This was merely the setup, the logical explanation for the conflict in each episode. The real focus of the series was the concept of independence and free will forever battling authority and submission. Most of the private eyes, spies, and cops presented over the years had been waging the same battle as Number Six, but it had never been so vividly expressed. Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade, Boston Blackie, Martin Kane, Peter Gunn, James Bond, John Drake, and Richard Kimble (on the other side of the law) had been inside-outsiders trying to cope with the encroachments of an increasingly impersonal world. Their unending struggle, though, had always been presented within the convenient and easily identifiable framework of crime and justice. In such a setting, the loner-hero might be insubordinate and a rebel but, in the long run, he still worked for the "legitimate" authority. In reality, the inside-outsider often had more in common with those he pursued than with his superiors. It was just a matter of which side of the fine line of the law one happened to fall on. Ultimately, the most important battle these heroes ever waged was the fight to keep their independent, idiosyncratic ways and not be forced to become average citizens.

In *The Prisoner,* this conflict was laid bare and the dichotomy revealed. Number Six had spent his adult life tracking down and capturing agents just like him. In The Village he had to face the consequences of his actions and experience first hand the effects of the system he had been working for. The possibility of freedom and escape was constantly dangled as an inducement for him to reveal his real reasons for resigning, but this was an illusion. His personal identity had always come from his own skill and instincts and if he ever dropped his guard, gave in, and accepted such an offer, he would be a beaten man, totally indistinguishable from the faceless, nameless populace at large.

It was never made clear who ran The Village. At various points in the series Soviet, British, and even joint control was suggested. Easily definable good guys and bad guys were thereby eliminated and it was possible that the good guys (the British) were not so good after all. There might not be any difference between them and the supposed bad guys (the Russians). Perhaps both, as important world powers, were inherently bad. Capitalism and Communism lost all meaning and the real, underlying division became clear in *The Prisoner:* control from above or personal free will.

Throughout the fall of 1967 in Britain (and the summer of 1968 in the United States, when CBS presented the series), a surprisingly large number of viewers kept tuning in to observe both McGoohan's splendid performance as a frustrated, but intelligent, caged rat, and the complex plots and elaborate sets that gave the show a level of sophistication far above normal TV fare. The beauty of *The Prisoner,* though, was its simultaneous success on many levels. While a rich, deep program that delved into complex psychological questions, it never ignored the basic rules of good action-adventure television. There was a standard fist fight in almost every episode and, if nothing else, *The Prisoner* could be viewed as an exciting escape story with elaborate gadgets and interesting characters to tickle the imagination. In fact, one episode effectively presented the entire philosophy of the program in the more familiar form of a Western. McGoohan portrayed Number Six as a loner-gunfighter former lawman who refused to become the flunky sheriff in a small town under the thumb of an all-powerful, corrupt judge. In this guise, Number Six seemed almost the same as Matt Dillon and Paladin, and the inside-outsider theme of *The Prisoner* was revealed as a universal one which had already been used by that most basic and durable American morality play, the Western.

The series ended in a tour de force, two-episode finale that revealed still another level of meaning. At the dramatic climax, Number Six discovered that Number One (the boss of all bosses), for whom he had been searching from the beginning, was none other than himself. He was both jailer and prisoner. Hunter and hunted. Persecutor and persecuted. As the characters in the comic strip "Pogo" once explained, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

For a show so different, *The Prisoner* did remarkably well. It became a minor mania in Britain and registered a more than respectable 34% share of the audience in America. The program also received enough critical acclaim to be rerun by CBS the following summer and it later turned up in syndicated reruns (sans commercials) on public television.

With the appearance of *The Prisoner,* many American TV observers at last admitted that Britain was outshining America in quality television production on several levels: sitcoms (*Steptoe and Son* and *Till Death Us Do Part*), adventure (*The Prisoner* and *The Avengers*), soap opera (the ever-present *Coronation Street*), and high-class soaps, called historical dramas (such as *The Forsyte Saga,* which was a hit in its first BBC airing during the 1966–67 season). America had few equivalents. For all their good points, programs such as *Ironside* and *Mannix* were not seen as profound expressions of television art. One reason for Britain's superior product was that British television was guided by a looser set of rules which allowed characters and plots to maintain a more realistic and earthy nature. Another very important reason was the existence of the government-funded, noncommercial BBC that could afford to experiment with forms considered too volatile for commercial broadcasters.

America had nothing to compare with the BBC. For more than ten years, NET had served as a quasi-network for more than one hundred educational stations in the United States, but it operated under a severely limited budget and was usually forced to send its programs through the mail. Instructional shows such as *The French Chef,* children's shows such as *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,* and "talking head" public affairs shows such as *Washington Week in Review,* while excellent programs, all reflected very frugal production techniques that pointed up the lack of available funds. The programs looked low budget and could never seriously compete with commercial fare for viewer support.

In early 1967, a commission funded by the Carnegie Corporation issued a report suggesting a radical rethinking of the basics behind educational television. It offered a blueprint for a new concept, public television, that would emphasize entertainment and information, not merely instruction. Congress would provide the major funding for public television, but an independent corporation would be established to dispense the money to the local stations in the NET network and act as a buffer between them and Congress. This would allow governmental support but, hopefully, preclude governmental control. President Johnson's strong support of the Carnegie commission's proposals helped push a bill through Congress that made most of the recommendations law. In November

March 4, 1968
The Dick Cavett Show. (ABC). Former gag writer Dick Cavett conducts a ninety-minute talk show on weekday mornings, with a twist: Not only does he include "serious" non-showbiz guests such as Buckminster Fuller, he brings them out first!

May 21, 1968
"Hunger in America." (CBS). Producer Martin Carr turns out an old-fashioned hard-hitting CBS documentary for *CBS Reports.* Carr focuses on malnutrition among Indians in the Southwest and tenant farmers in Virginia, in the style of Ed Murrow's 1960 "Harvest of Shame." The agriculture industry is quick to criticize the report and even the Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, finds it necessary to defend the department's hunger policy from the embarrassing footage.

May 27, 1968
After only five months as anchor for *The ABC Evening News,* Bob Young is replaced by Frank Reynolds.

August 5, 1968
The Republican National Convention opens in Miami Beach. ABC opts for "selected coverage" and sticks with regular entertainment fare for the first ninety minutes of prime time.

September 6, 1968
The era of fifteen-minute soap operas, once a staple of daytime radio and television, comes to an end with the final quarter-hour broadcasts of CBS's *Search for Tomorrow* and *The Guiding Light.* Three days later, the two shows return in expanded thirty-minute formats.

1967 Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which set up the fifteen-member buffer organization called the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Immediately, CPB ran into the first of many governmental road blocks. Congress was to grant $9 million for CPB's first year of operation but, in early 1968, both the White House and Congress delayed the actual transfer of funds, stalling governmental support for the new system. Instead, as in the past, the largess of many private organizations kept public television afloat until a lower compromise figure could be agreed to by the government. Such haggling over congressional money became a yearly ritual that repeatedly left the CPB on unsure footing. Even with all its complications, though, the institution of government funding was an important step for the future of public television.

The first program to incorporate the concept of public television was *PBL* (the *Public Broadcast Laboratory*), a weekly, two and one-half hour live news magazine program. The Ford Foundation, which had been channeling money to educational television since NET's inception in 1952, donated $10 million in 1967 for the creation of the program at the urging of former CBS News president, Fred Friendly, who had become the foundation's advisor on television. With the exception of the *CBS News Hour,* the networks had largely given up weekly, hard-hitting news shows, preferring instead safe specials such as "Discover America with Jose Jimenez." *PBL* promised to be unlike anything else then available on television and certainly unlike anything ever seen on NET. It would be live, in color, and use some well-known, highly professional talent drawn from commercial television itself. Edward P. Morgan was granted a two-year leave of absence from ABC to act as *PBL*'s anchorman. Tom Pettit of NBC became head of one of the regional bureaus that produced pieces for the program. CBS News veteran Av Westin was named executive producer. Advance publicity touted the show as a "revolution in broadcasting" and Westin explained the need for it, declaring, "The time has come to put an end to what I call 'music up and under documentaries' in which, as we head into the final commercial, we are reminded that there is a problem and certainly something ought to be done about it—but, please don't ask what."

The premiere of *PBL* in November 1967 was not quite a revolution, but it was an important landmark in American TV. The first program was a cross between *See It Now* and *Omnibus,* using a mixture of documentary and drama segments all devoted to an overall theme, race relations. The documentary reports examined the Cleveland and Boston mayoral contests, which centered on race; a traditional panel discussion presented appropriately antagonistic extremists (from Chicago); and a dramatic production, "A Day of Absence," showed a fantasy world in which all the blacks in America decided to leave, and white society found itself unable to cope with their absence. *PBL* also incorporated sixty-second spots (dubbed "anti-commercials"), placing them at points in the show where their counterparts on a regular commercial program would normally appear. The messages revealed that all the competing brands of aspirin *were* alike, and that the long-longer-longest fad among cigarette manufacturers only resulted in more-most-mostest tar for the suffering consumer.

The most important aspect of *PBL* was that it successfully adopted the methods and formats used by the commercial networks, signaling a sharp break from the pure educational slant of NET's past. In place of the many drab and deadly boring pseudo-lectures, *PBL* brought in well-known commentators, slick production, and elaborate graphics and sets. It showed that American television could have it both ways, offering programs that were informative and classy as well as entertaining and appealing. Unfortunately, *PBL* lasted only two seasons and never became a hit on its own.

PBL was debilitated from its inception by a series of internecine battles as people at both the Ford Foundation and NET tried to mold the program to fit their own expectations. The thinly veiled anti-white viewpoint of the nearly all black theatrical troupe in the premiere episode rankled a few corporate nerves, so "A Day of Absence" was the only important drama presentation *PBL* ever offered. The anti-commercials were also judged too controversial and dropped after a few weeks, as the program settled into a more traditional documentary format. Even in this approach there was continued disagreement among the *PBL* overseers throughout its first season as the traditional educational faction (led by the dean of the Columbia school of journalism) fought the progressive public wing (headed by Av Westin) for total control of the program. After a showdown in June 1968, Westin's side retained control, but bitter feelings remained. Money shortages during the second season forced a drastic cutback of in-house production and, after a gallant but losing struggle, *PBL* died on May 18, 1969. Most of its top staff members moved to ABC's news department.

In spite of its troubled history, *PBL* served as an important force in broadcasting. While the commercial networks remained mum, *PBL* examined such issues as a proposed anti-ballistic missile system (ABM), community antenna television (CATV), health care, and the possibility of a second Northeast blackout. It offered independent documentary producers such as Frederick Wiseman invaluable exposure, airing individualistic views of Vietnam, Martin Luther King, Jr., cancer, law and order, and country music. The very existence of *PBL* spurred NBC and CBS to increase their own output of real news documentaries, and the program served as the direct model for NBC's *First Tuesday* and CBS's *60 Minutes,* two newsmagazine shows which premiered in the 1968–69 season.

Despite the prodding from public television in 1967, the commercial networks were still caught in the cautious doldrums of "no guts journalism," especially in their reports on the Vietnam War. Even as American troop strength neared one-half million, network coverage of the war continued practically unchanged, reaching a symbolic low point from late 1967 through January 1968. Largely due to lobbying by CBS, all three networks tacitly agreed to devote very little attention to the October peace march on Washington by thousands of war protesters, which ended in hundreds of arrests when the group stormed the Pentagon. In January, ABC, accepting the inevitable, canceled its excellently produced, objectively balanced, but rarely seen weekly Vietnam show, *ABC Scope.* In contrast that same month, public television displayed its guts and aired a frankly pro-Viet Cong documentary by Felix Greene, "Inside North Vietnam." Actually, CBS had originally paid for the film but, upon seeing the footage, decided to use only brief excerpts on the nightly news. *NET Journal,* however, presented more than half of the ninety-minute documentary which, though biased, provided a rare look at the North Vietnamese in their homeland.

The film was followed by a one-hour hawk and dove debate but, even so, NET received a great deal of flak for airing the material at all. In April, however, CBS sent its own Charles Collingwood directly to Hanoi for a series of filmed reports. In just a few months, the commercial networks had drastically altered their coverage of the war. The Tet offensive in early February provided the dramatic rallying point for the change and the end of the era of "no guts journalism."

For years, network correspondents had been generally accepting the official government line that the United States was, in fact, winning the war and that the Viet Cong were growing weaker and weaker. Suddenly, this supposedly weakened enemy found the strength to launch a major, well-coordinated offensive throughout South Vietnam. After innumerable evenings of generally pointless jungle combat scenes, Tet gave the networks exciting, street-by-street fighting footage that dramatized the war as never before. The Viet Cong occupied a number of provincial capitals for a few days and the American embassy in Saigon itself for a few hours. Eventually, the U.S. pushed the Viet Cong back while inflicting heavy casualties, but an important image had been shattered. It was clear that the American government was either ignorant of the Viet Cong's real strength or lying to the American public. For the first time in years, network reporters aggressively and openly questioned the government's position.

The Tet offensive also provided one powerful photographic moment that would come to symbolize the Vietnam War itself. During the height of the offensive, while NBC cameras rolled, the Saigon chief of police calmly raised a small revolver to the temple of a Viet Cong prisoner and pulled the trigger. The prisoner dropped to the ground and blood spurted from his head. It was a quick, passionless act without any great emotions or dramatic words. None were necessary. Though the prisoner was no doubt guilty of something, the real-life execution, taking place without even the niceties of a legal conviction, seemed the final outrage to many Americans. Following the Tet offensive, more and more people joined the reawakened press in publicly questioning the credibility of the government's war policy and the promise of eventual victory.

Network news attention quickly shifted back to the domestic front, as the growing skepticism on the war turned the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination into a race in which the incumbent president might actually lose. On March 31, in a special television speech, President Johnson announced a reduction in the American bombing of Vietnam, then dramatically withdrew himself from the campaign. Robert Kennedy, Eugene McCarthy, and Vice President Hubert Humphrey were left to vie for the nomination. Among the Republicans, Richard Nixon was well on his way to completing a long personal comeback struggle.

Both parties staged their nominating conventions in August. For the first time, ABC decided to depart from traditional gavel-to-gavel television coverage of the event and opted for ninety-minute "selected coverage" (9:30–11:00 P.M.). This allowed the network to air some of its regular entertainment programs while NBC and CBS vied for the attention of those wrapped up in the convention's developments. The Republican convention in Miami in early August (where Nixon received his party's nomination) turned out to be a tedious affair with very few interesting moments anyway. The Democratic convention in Chicago in late August, however, proved an entirely different matter.

A strong feeling of enmity between the press and politicians developed in Chicago even before the convention opened. There was exceptionally tight security due, in part, to the genuine fear which developed after the assassination of Robert Kennedy in June. Beyond that, however, Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley seemed determined to prevent anything or anyone, especially the press, from spoiling the traditional convention euphoria. A protracted union dispute (which many network executives felt Daley could have settled if he had really wanted to) wreaked havoc on the networks' plans for live coverage of events throughout the city. Daley and the Democrats also tried to impose strict reductions on the number of press people allowed on the convention floor. What's more, there was obvious tension between pro-administration and antiwar factions, both in the convention hall and gathered on the streets outside. When the convention itself began, the barely contained antagonism broke out into the open.

The press openly referred to Chicago as an armed camp, even a police state, evoking memories of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia only days before. Despite the security (or because of it), violence broke out both outside and inside, with parts of the convention floor sometimes resembling a wrestling ring as frustrated anti-war Democrats (while numerous) were out-voted at every turn. (Vice President Humphrey wound up as the Democratic nominee.) At the height of the melee inside the convention hall, CBS's Dan Rather was shown being punched and dragged from the floor by security forces, prompting Walter Cronkite to proclaim, "I think we've got a bunch of thugs here, Dan." Outside, an eruption of violence between demonstrators and police resulted in vivid and graphic TV footage of pitched battles, flying objects, and brutal beatings. Ironically, the limited technical connections for live coverage throughout the city delayed delivery of some of these images just enough so that when they hit the air, they were in direct competition with the main portion of the convention session. The result was an eerie counterpoint of outside riot footage juxtaposed against convention hall platitudes, touching a sensitive nerve in those watching at home.

In the many post-convention inquiries by the FCC and independent organizations, the networks were acquitted of taking a biased point of view in covering the Democratic convention. Nevertheless, television was once again cast in the role of the messenger with the bad news, punished for telling what it knew. The whole world might have been watching, as the street protesters chanted, but the whole world was not getting the same message. People of every point of view were infuriated by what they saw at the Chicago convention, but they adjusted the television images to fit their own preconceived beliefs. Anti-war forces called the outside confrontations a police riot, driven by instances of deliberate police brutality. They angrily viewed the mayor of Chicago as responsible for their treatment, considering him a heavy-handed despot who directed the convention from his delegate seat, heckling speakers like a common street hood. Many others, viewing the same scenes, saw a gang of unruly riotous protestors who taunted and attacked police, provoking officials into reacting. Yet, they still received free publicity, even open support, from the news media.

No matter how the Chicago convention was seen, however, television was accused of a much worse sin: forcing millions of Americans to witness the outrageous events and choose sides.

1968–69 SEASON

28. The One Punch Season

THE CHICAGO CONVENTION SOURED Americans not only toward television news but also toward the Democratic Party. As a result, Democratic nominee Hubert Humphrey began his campaign in September far behind Richard Nixon, the Republican candidate. Unlike the 1964 presidential campaign, the 1968 race never appeared openly vicious and cutthroat. Nonetheless, behind the scenes there was a great deal of intense activity to foster positive, effective images, especially through television.

Remembering his experience against John Kennedy in 1960, Nixon turned down Humphrey's incessant requests for a series of televised debates. Nixon's strategy hinged instead on maintaining complete control over his television environment with the help of a TV-savvy team (including twenty-eight-year-old talk show producer Roger Ailes). As depicted by Joe McGinnis in his book *The Selling of the President, 1968*, their strategy successfully bypassed Nixon's traditional foes, the working press. When Nixon arrived in a town, he would take part in a staged press conference-discussion program with a supposedly typical cross section of local citizens. Participants in these carefully arranged and highly formatted discussions were gathered in each city by the Nixon advance team as part of its preparation for the candidate's appearance there. Former college football coach Bud Wilkinson traveled along and hosted the local broadcasts. In settings reminiscent of real press conferences, the selected citizens would lob softball questions at Nixon who sharply handled each one, resulting in the appearance of frank and open debate without any of the risks.

Humphrey slowly began fighting his way back, gathering sympathy from home viewers who saw the vice president shouted down by anti-war protesters at rally after rally. In an effective Salt Lake City speech broadcast nationwide on September 30, Humphrey broke, ever so slightly, from President Johnson's Vietnam policies, giving him his long-sought image of independence.

Throughout October the gap between the two candidates narrowed and, by November 1, it was a dead heat. On election eve, Monday, November 4, both candidates held separate two-hour national call-in programs on which average citizens phoned in questions to either Nixon (on NBC) or Humphrey (on ABC). Humphrey, ever anxious to debate, had aides monitoring the Nixon broadcast and often took time to respond to charges his opponent had made moments earlier.

Election night itself proved to be a marathon, the longest election coverage in TV history at that time. Near noon of the following day, Nixon was declared the winner, just barely edging out Humphrey in the popular vote. Six years after his supposed "last press conference," Nixon had completed a remarkable political comeback. Hoping to start fresh, both the President-elect and the press agreed to an initial "hands off" phase, but many doubted the honeymoon would last very long.

With public interest in news events at an election year high, in September CBS launched *60 Minutes*, its version of *PBL*. The new show, which alternated with the *CBS News Hour* on Tuesday nights, used the "magazine for television" design quite effectively, even down to the graphics and set. The program was broken into several distinct segments that mixed both hard news and soft feature stories, with veterans Harry Reasoner and Mike Wallace serving as hosts and *See It Now* veteran Don Hewitt as executive producer. On the first show of the series, they presented the views of Italian, German, and British journalists on the American presidential campaign along with an interview with Attorney General Ramsay Clark on American police as the hard news items. These were balanced with warm, homey film essays showing Nixon and Humphrey on the nights they were nominated, and an animated short, "Why Man Creates."

NBC retaliated in January with a similar show, hosted by Sander Vanocur, the two-hour *First Tuesday,* which ran once a month on Tuesday nights. It had a generally softer tone than *60 Minutes,* offering such features as a report on Philip Blaiberg, one of the first successful heart transplant patients; a portrait of Rita Hayworth at fifty, and an in-depth look at the baton industry. It was *First Tuesday,* however, that came up with the TV news scoop of the year on its second program (February 4, 1969). In a story on the American military's use of chemical warfare, Vanocur reported that in March 1968 there had been an accident in Dugway, Utah, which resulted in the death of a large number of sheep. *60 Minutes* had done a two-part story on chemical warfare four months earlier, but had allowed the government to review the final product before airing, and its story produced no such revelations. When the Defense Department offered to help NBC (with the stipulation that it would be able to review the final product), the network turned down the agency and pursued the story on its own. New York Congressman Richard McCarthy saw the February 4 piece and, wondering why he had never heard of the sheep incident, launched an investigation. Because of the television report and the subsequent congressional action, the Department of Defense not only admitted that it had caused the death of the sheep, but also ended all in-air tests of chemicals and gasses for biological warfare.

Congress and television were interacting in a very different way in the upper body as Senator John Pastore of Rhode Island again began beating the TV violence drum. The upsurge in crime shows in the previous two years had once again raised the issue of excessive TV violence and fostered another inconclusive round of debate on its possibly harmful effects upon children. The networks feared that in the atmosphere of public outrage following the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy (in April and June of 1968), Senator Pastore might suggest some form of special federal regulation if they did nothing about television violence themselves. Therefore, the networks sent out the word in the middle of 1968 to tone down the level of violence in productions planned for the fall.

Assuming this to be just another passing furor, some producers tried to keep their cop and Western formats essentially intact by merely limiting the length and severity of the gun play and fist fights until the congressional heat passed. A star in a new Western series complained that, under the new rules, after an Indian was shot and fell one hundred feet from a cliff, clutching his chest, a follow-up scene had to be added with the gunman leaning over the cliff saying, 'He'll live." Even the veterans had to adapt, and the season premiere of *Felony Squad* contained exactly one punch. What's more, there was only one instance of police gunfire and, following that, detective Sam Stone (Howard Duff) leaned over the victim and said, "He's still alive." These strange new rules and illogical twists for action stories gave the 1968–69 season the derogatory nickname of the "one punch season."

With violence out, at least for a while, cop shows had to scrounge for a different type of distinctive hook. *Hawaii Five-O* opted for beautiful travelogue-like scenery, much like *Hawaiian Eye* and *Adventures in Paradise* in the early 1960s. There, lantern-jawed Steve McGarrett (Jack Lord) headed a team of plainclothes detectives who used all the legal and extra-legal measures necessary to foil any criminal schemes that threatened to disturb the tranquility of their island paradise. Jack Webb, whose police shows had always deemphasized violence, capitalized on the swing away from action and turned out the first in a series of *Dragnet* clones, *Adam-12*. The new program featured a pair of tight-lipped young policemen (played by Martin Milner and Kent McCord) who became involved in three or four unrelated and not very violent crimes each week while on patrol in Los Angeles.

NBC's *Name of the Game* brought the flippant hero back to the forefront in the old but reliable premise of journalist-as-cop. The ninety-minute weekly series, based on the made-for-TV movie "Fame Is the Name of the Game," presented the story of Howard Publications and the exploits of its publisher and reporters who all worked tirelessly to expose the fetid world of organized crime in such magazines as *Crime*. The show sometimes borrowed the ploy used by *Dragnet* and *The FBI,* grafting a few topical characters onto a well-worn crime story, but the glib-talking performers were the chief draw of the series. Gene Barry, Tony Franciosa, and Robert Stack rotated in the starring role each week, with all three receiving assistance from the company's girl Friday, played by Susan Saint James. In spite of occasional plots based on contemporary issues, at heart *Name of the Game* was pure pulp fiction, with just a few surface trappings of reality. Early in one episode, for instance, Tony Franciosa received a bruise in a fist fight and—violating television's unwritten rule of instantaneous regeneration—he kept that bruise through the rest of the episode.

The prime exponent of 1968 television reality, however, was ABC's *Mod Squad* (produced by Aaron Spelling). The series marked the first full-fledged attempt by a network to absorb the look and lingo of the self-proclaimed counterculture and turn them into a standard TV action show. In the face of the deemphasis on violence, ABC wanted a gimmick to keep the action-adventure type format functioning almost undisturbed. With an eye on attracting the younger audience that was boosting the ratings of the youth-flavored comedy-variety shows, the network hoped to create a new sort of TV hero in *Mod Squad.* The three main stars in this cop show were not only young, they were young outcasts. Preseason ads identified the mod squad as: "One black, one white, and one blonde." Pete Cochran (Michael Cole) was a troubled reject from a wealthy Beverly Hills family, driven to committing petty crimes while racked by the existential angst then so fashionable. Underneath his denim garb, though, lurked the soul of a three-piece suit. Julie Barnes (Peggy Lipton) was a poor white girl who had run away from her prostitute mother. Reflecting the changing times in the world of television, she was a very pretty young woman, but no dummy. Linc Hayes (Clarence Williams III) was an intensely brooding, beautiful black rebel, a veteran of Watts who perpetually wore dark sunglasses. With black consciousness then undergoing a revolution in America, television was beginning a 180-degree turn in its portrayal of blacks. They were no longer bumbling, easy-going po' folk like Beulah, but rather articulate neo-philosophers just descended from Olympus, though still spouting streetwise jargon.

September 16, 1968
Richard Nixon says "Sock it to *me?*" on *Laugh-In.*

September 17, 1968
The Doris Day Show. (CBS). The singer-actress begins a hectic five years adapting to a changing television world. In the first season, Day's Doris Martin character is a city widow who moves to the country with her two children. She begins commuting to a job in the city (as a working mother) during the show's second season, moving back to town with her clan in the third. Finally, in the fall of 1971, the family disappears and she becomes a swinging single woman working for a powerful news magazine in San Francisco.

September 23, 1968
Here's Lucy. (CBS). Lucille Ball again uses her durable formula of wacky redhead against the world. Gale Gordon continues as her blustery boss, but, in a special addition to the cast, Lucy's real-life children, Lucie Arnaz and Desi Arnaz, Jr., play her fictional children, Kim and Craig.

November 17, 1968
The Heidi Incident. To begin on time a heavily promoted new made-for-TV version of "Heidi," NBC opts to cut from a Sunday afternoon football game in progress (with the New York Jets holding a comfortable lead over the Oakland Raiders, and only one minute left to play). Though the children's special airs intact, East Coast viewers miss a stunning football comeback as Oakland scores twice to win.

December 3, 1968
"Singer Presents Elvis." (NBC). The king of rock'n'roll makes his first television appearance in eight years, headlining a one-hour special that is a ratings smash, with both the TV soundtrack album and a single from the show ("If I Can Dream") becoming big hits. Quickly dubbed "The Comback Special," the program's musical show stopper is an intimate in-the-round performance with Presley at center stage, recapturing his 1950s rocking swagger.

FALL 1968 SCHEDULE

	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
MON	local	The Avengers		Peyton Place	THE OUTCASTS		The Big Valley		ABC
	local	Gunsmoke		HERE'S LUCY	Mayberry R.F.D.	Family Affair	Carol Burnett Show		CBS
	local	I Dream Of Jeannie	Rowan And Martin's Laugh-In		NBC MONDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES				NBC
TUE	local	THE MOD SQUAD		It Takes A Thief		N.Y.P.D.	THAT'S LIFE		ABC
	local	LANCER		Red Skelton Hour		DORIS DAY SHOW	CBS News Hour 60 MINUTES		CBS
	local	Jerry Lewis Show		JULIA	NBC Tuesday Night At The Movies				NBC
WED	local	HERE COME THE BRIDES		Peyton Place	The ABC Wednesday Night Movie				ABC
	local	Daktari		THE GOOD GUYS	The Beverly Hillbillies	Green Acres	Jonathan Winters Show		CBS
	local	The Virginian			Kraft Music Hall # Bob Hope Show		THE OUTSIDER		NBC
THR	local	THE UGLIEST GIRL IN TOWN	The Flying Nun	Bewitched	That Girl	JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN		local	ABC
	local	BLONDIE	HAWAII FIVE-O		CBS Thursday Night Movies				CBS
	local	Daniel Boone		Ironside		Dragnet 1969	Dean Martin Show		NBC
FRI	local	Operation: Entertainment		Felony Squad	DON RICKLES SHOW	The Guns Of Will Sonnett	Judd, For The Defense		ABC
	local	The Wild, Wild West		Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.	CBS Friday Night Movies				CBS
	local	The High Chaparral		THE NAME OF THE GAME			Star Trek		NBC
SAT	local	The Dating Game	The Newlywed Game	Lawrence Welk Show		Hollywood Palace		local	ABC
	local	Jackie Gleason Show		My Three Sons	Hogan's Heroes	Petticoat Junction	Mannix		CBS
	local	ADAM-12	Get Smart	THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies				NBC
SUN	LAND OF THE GIANTS		The FBI		The ABC Sunday Night Movie				ABC
	Lassie	Gentle Ben	Ed Sullivan Show		Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour		Mission: Impossible		CBS
	NEW ADVENTURES OF HUCK FINN	Walt Disney's Wonderful World Of Color		The Mothers-In-Law	Bonanza		THE BEAUTIFUL PHYLLIS DILLER SHOW		NBC

The three young demigods had each been arrested on minor charges. Then, middle-aged middle-American police captain Adam Greer (Tige Andrews) talked the reluctant troika into a strange deal. They could do something positive and work within the system as undercover agents who would take on special youth-oriented assignments, possibly even hunting down criminals among their former colleagues. It was a cumbersome, strained premise, but it worked. The three hip, "with it" juvenile detectives were easier for America's teens to identify with than either the square-jawed heroes of *Dragnet* and *The FBI* or the high-living aristocrats of *Name of the Game.* The fact that the trio was secretly working for the establishment mollified the oldsters. With Pete, Julie, and Linc involved in cases as timely as the evening's headlines, ABC could exploit current issues such as youth rebellion, drug abuse, and racial tension while making sure the legitimate authority always triumphed in the end. Now *this* was TV reality.

NBC and CBS, feeling they had been left behind, quickly turned out a number of soapy "with-it" drama specials that were equally facile at incorporating then current issues into traditional TV plots. The occasional drama series, *CBS Playhouse,* presented a string of stories dealing with ostensibly rebellious young men who pounded their chests and questioned society but, after a talk with a learned elder, saw the light and got a haircut. This symbolic shearing became TV's new happy ending as youth and maturity were reconciled and the prodigal son looked nice for the holidays.

The sudden urge to "tell it like it is" and thus appear "relevant" also began to take hold in the traditional sitcom format as well. NBC patted itself on the back and presented the first modern situation comedy to focus directly on blacks, *Julia.* As if to make up for lost time, though, the series shared the *Mod Squad* approach of raising its black characters to nearly divine heights. Julia (Diahann Carroll) was a registered nurse who possessed every possible positive human attribute: she was kind, sweet, forgiving, thoughtful, obedient, and reverent. Befitting the times, her husband had been killed in Vietnam, leaving her to care for their young boy, Corey (Marc Copage). However, this meant that the head of television's first black family in years was actually a single mom, a setup that nearly as rare as a black lead. (On television, sitcom widows with kids were quickly remarried.) There was little chance that this image would really upset viewers, though, because Julia and her nearly indistinguishable from dozens of white counterparts such as the Andersons, living in the same aseptically clean expanse of bland suburbia as they did. She, too, faced predictable family complications, and had a child too adorably cute to be believable. In an odd way, then, *Julia* really did bring true racial equality to the era's television lineup because it was just as realistic and relevant as any other sitcom then on the American airwaves.

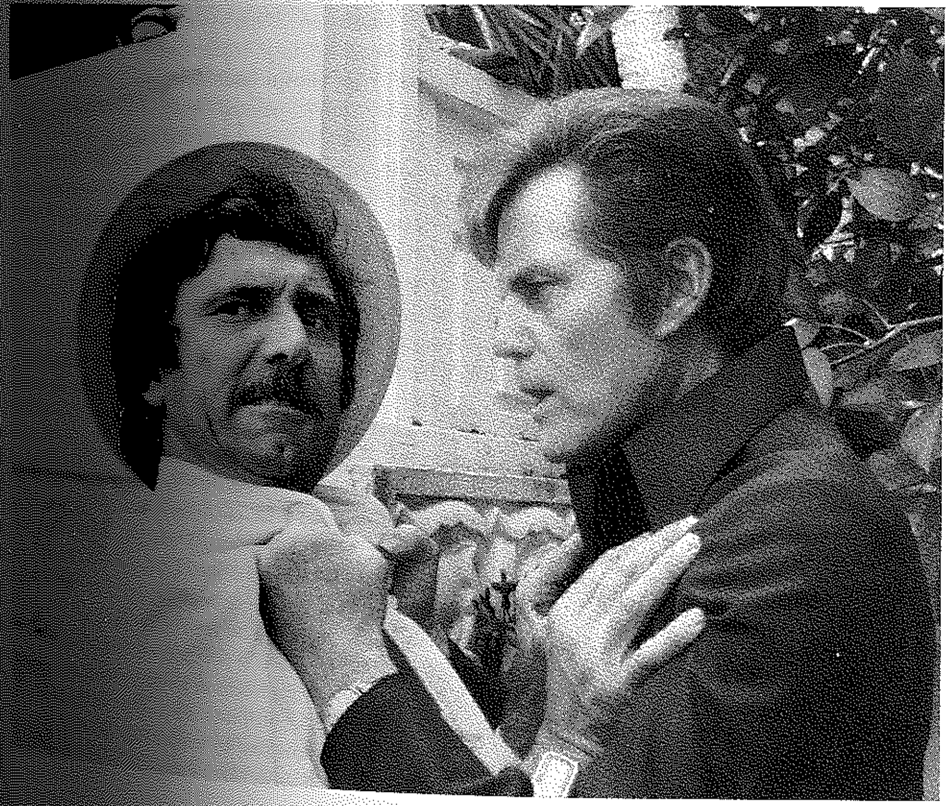
What actual relevancy there might have been was still found only on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* and *Laugh-In,* both of which had blossomed throughout 1968. The Smothers were the

ing their oats, having squeezed *Bonanza* from the number one spot on television while remaining comfortably in the top twenty themselves. Drawing on their hit status, they pushed to include more and more material that was considered unacceptable to the CBS censor, achieving mixed success. Pete Seeger was at last permitted to sing "Waist Deep in Big Muddy," but Harry Belafonte was not allowed to sing "Lord, Don't Stop the Carnival" as accompaniment to video tapes of the 1968 Democratic convention's street confrontations. Local CBS affiliates grew increasingly nervous over the Smothers' antics, fearing incensed complaints from viewers and possible government reprimands. To mollify them, CBS instituted a closed circuit preview screening of *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* for affiliates, allowing them several days to decide whether they wanted to air that week's program. Yet while the nitpicking by the locals and the CBS censor continued week after week, the Canadian commercial network (CTV) regularly aired the show Sunday nights and never registered any complaints; in fact, it often included the segments excised from the U.S. transmission.

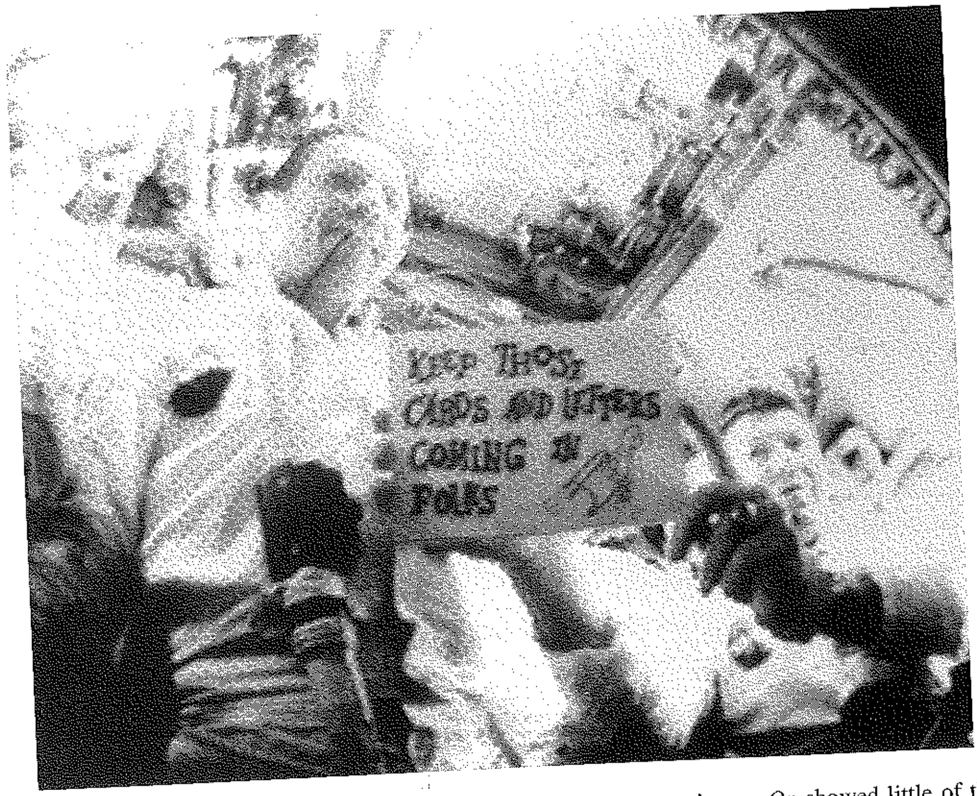
The first showdown between the Smothers and CBS came in March 1969 when the network substituted a Smothers' rerun for that week's scheduled show, claiming the program had been delivered too late for the affiliate preview. The Smothers said that the CBS censor was waging a vendetta against them and demanded that the network change its censorship policy or they would quit. After all, they pointed out, it had been censorship changes that delayed delivery of the program in question. The network had objected to some remarks by Joan Baez about her husband David (who was then serving a three-year jail sentence for draft evasion), insisting the Smothers delete her line, "Anybody who lays it out in front like that generally gets busted, especially if you organize, which he did." Tommy Smothers had agreed to the cut under protest but, at the last minute, the censor had raised some additional objections, making it impossible for the Smothers to meet the affiliate preview deadline with the completed show. After heated behind-the-scenes meetings, the Smothers capitulated and the canceled show was aired (as edited by CBS) on March 30. The next week, the two sides reached the breaking point again, and this time the Smothers lost both the battle and the war. On Thursday, April 3, CBS notified the Smothers Brothers that the final-cut tape of the program scheduled for broadcast April 6 had not yet arrived in New York for review. During production, CBS had objected to two segments: the ribbing of Senator Pastore by Tommy and guest Dan Rowan (should the senator receive the Fickle Finger of Fate award?) and the double entendre monologue by comedian David Steinberg, who interpreted the Biblical story of Jonah and the whale with lines such as "Then the Gentiles grabbed the Jew by his Old Testament." So on April 6, as the controversial episode aired as scheduled in Canada, U.S. viewers were shown a repeat of the November 10 program.

The next morning, the Smothers held an impromptu press conference in the screening room of the Four Seasons restaurant in New York City. TV critics from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia viewed the controversial program and heard an angry outburst by the Smothers against CBS. As far as CBS was concerned the war was already over. The Smothers Brothers were fired. Walter Cronkite's news show on Friday had already carried the story that *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* had been terminated. Recalcitrant stars could hold out for more money, but calling out CBS in public and repeatedly refusing to toe the network line was something the top brass would not tolerate. CBS never aired the April 6 episode, filling the time slot with the last two shows that had already been taped, then playing reruns until a replacement was ready. (In September, the censored show did air through local syndication by Metromedia.) The Smothers filed an extensive lawsuit against CBS charging breach of contract, trade libel, and infringement of copyright, and eventually (1973) won a court judgment. But their *Comedy Hour* was gone.

They had hoped their success would provide them with enough clout to take their fight for principles to the limit, but the truth was that with the national political mood increasingly polarized and



Hawaii Five-O's tried-and-true crime formula ran for twelve years on CBS. Series star Jack Lord *(right)* and guest villain George Lazenby. *(CBS Photo Archive © 2003 CBS Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)*


KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING IN FOLKS

On October 13, 1968, the crew of the *Apollo* 7 sent a live television transmission back to viewers back home. *(From left)* Command module pilot Donn F. Eisele and mission commander Walter Schirra, Jr. *(NASA)*

watchdogs such as Senator Pastore breathing down broadcasters' necks, none of the networks felt the extra trouble caused by such volatile figures as the Smothers Brothers was worth it. By 1970, the Smothers Brothers wanted to return to network television, and they turned up in a bland special that won them a brief summer series on ABC. In all their subsequent appearances, though, they seemed noticeably subdued, especially in contrast to their reputation for generating exciting controversy on their old show.

NBC's *Laugh-In*, though, remained where it was. In spite of occasional political needling, *Laugh-In*'s most revolutionary aspects were its format and pacing. Once the show had become a hit, both were easily accepted and, with the exception of a few ticklish double-entendre jokes, the program was comparatively safe for the network. After its slow start in 1968, *Laugh-In* overtook Lucille Ball and became the top rated TV show on television through most of 1969. Then, surprisingly, nothing happened.

Normally all the networks eagerly jumped on the bandwagon of a new hit format and began turning out numerous formula copies. In the early 1960s, the success of such country hits as *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* led to dozens of similar shows throughout prime time and to a strong rural orientation by CBS that remained the backbone of the network's programming even in 1969. *Laugh-In*'s intricate format and image of topicality, however, proved a difficult mixture to match. The networks made several attempts to clone the series, but only one caught on.

In early 1969, ABC launched two *Laugh-In* lookalikes: *What's It All About, World?* and *Turn-On,* which were both complete failures. *What's It All About, World?* was a sorry copy that was lost in the netherworld between a standard comedy-variety format and *Laugh-In*'s zaniness. Dean Jones was the program host, but his image was far too straight-laced for the task. The troupe of comedy unknowns could never quite find their mark either, even aided by veteran newsman Alex Dreier. The show tried to be titillating without offending anybody. *Turn-On* was even worse.

Turn-On (Get it? *Laugh-In. Turn-On.)* earned the dubious honor of having the shortest network run in television history: one show. Though it used *Laugh-In*'s own producer, George Schlatter, *Turn-On* showed little of the humor and ingenuity of the original, concentrating instead on the mere mechanics of the hit format. Even the human host was eliminated and replaced by a computer, though it was assisted by a guest celebrity (Tim Conway in the first-last episode). The pacing in the program was nothing short of frenetic, modeling itself after the incessant tempo of television commercials: three hundred separate bits were crammed into the half-hour premiere, with the show's credits interspersed randomly throughout. Even with *Laugh-In* an established hit and its fast paced format accepted by the public, *Turn-On* still appeared to many as an incomprehensible mishmash. What's worse, almost every joke fell flat. Two policemen holding Mace cans intoned, "Let us spray." Draft dodgers were shown hitchhiking to Sweden. Maura McGiveney played the slinky, painted Body Politic (à la Judy Carne). "Topical" political comments included such gems as: "The capital of South Vietnam is in Swiss banks!"; "Down with Higher Education!"; and the exchange "I just bought the Washington Senators." "Oh, all I could afford was a Congressman!" The strongest viewer reaction was touched off by several questionable jokes concerning Pope Paul VI and by the sight of a young woman eagerly pulling the lever of a machine dispensing "the pill."

Even before *Turn-On* was aired on Wednesday night, February 5, a number of ABC affiliates expressed their uneasiness over the show, with some either refusing to carry it at all or shifting its local broadcast time to an obscure slot (the type formerly warmed by *ABC Scope).* Though many people missed seeing the show, *Turn-On*'s alleged sacrilegious tenor immediately turned it into a national controversy. An executive of ABC affiliate WEWS in Cleveland sent a wire to the network which stormed, "If you naughty little boys have to write dirty words on the walls, please don't use our walls." This angry missive received a great deal of publicity, though it was later pointed out that the man who sent the wire had not seen the program. While ABC's position of last place in the network ratings race gave it more freedom to experiment with new ideas in the hope that one might turn into a hit show, it was, at the same time, in the weakest position to withstand intense public criticism. On February 7, two days after *Turn-On*'s premiere, the program was axed. Three additional shows, already in the can, were never aired. ABC padded the Wednesday night movie to fill *Turn-On*'s slot until it could find a substitute. Taking no chances, the network replaced *Turn-On* with the wholesome musical-variety of *The King Family.*

Laugh-In's George Schlatter had no better luck on NBC. In October 1968 he produced "Soul," a pilot for a series that NBC planned to slot as a black version of *Laugh-In.* The "Soul" special starred veteran entertainers Lou Rawls, Redd Foxx, Nipsey Russell, and Slappy White, and received acceptable critical reviews, but NBC was unable to sell the projected series to sponsors.

Strangely enough, the only successful copy of *Laugh-In* was one that avoided the liberal-urban slant of the original and settled instead for deep-fried country corn, CBS's *Hee-Haw,* the network's replacement for the canceled Smothers Brothers. While few fans of *Laugh-In* would ever consider watching *Hee-Haw,* both shows were two peas from the same pod, featuring virtually identical formats. *Hee-Haw* merely substituted rural trappings. Familiar country music stars Buck Owens and Roy Clark acted as hosts and they were supported by celebrity guest stars and a comedy troupe of proficient unknowns which soon developed its own familiar characters. Like *Laugh-In,* the pace was rapid, the catch phrases redundant, and the dialogue filled with sexually oriented double-entendres. Ironically, *Hee-Haw* turned out to be the most resilient of all the clones, even outlasting *Laugh-In* itself. At first *Laugh-In* had displayed more wit but, by 1970, the program found itself practically a prisoner of its own catch phrases and format. Even the very name *Laugh-In* seemed anachronistic. *Hee-Haw* suffered from some of the same problems but it was able to maintain a more consistent, if somewhat lower, strain of humor during its twenty-three years on the air (all but the first two as an independent syndicated series).

Hee-Haw was originally intended to serve as only summer filler, but it was such a success that CBS brought it back at the first opportunity. In mid-December of 1969, *Hee-Haw* took the time slot of another successful, but more traditional, down-home comedy-variety show, *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour.* That, in turn, switched back to Sunday, taking the old Smothers time period, where it had also begun life (as the Smothers 1968 summer replacement). The Smothers Brothers were gone and these two new hits merely reinforced CBS's decade-old image (going back to the James Aubrey days) as the rural network.

Despite occasional gestures to other forms, CBS inevitably turned to rural-appeal fare for both new season programs and emergency substitutions. Even its copy of the innovative *Laugh-In* followed the same pattern. What's more, the network continued to carry the largest stable of aging veterans which, while still successful, could not last indefinitely. CBS needed some fresh faces and formats to maintain viewer loyalty should some of the old favorites begin to fade during the increasingly tight ratings race. For this season, only some key mid-season shifts allowed CBS to beat a strong challenge from NBC and maintain its long streak of season wins. Nonetheless, CBS continued essentially unchanged into the 1969–70 season, even picking up a sitcom discarded by NBC (*Get Smart*) for the fall of 1969. After all, though NBC and ABC continued to tinker with unproven formats such as the more topical urban slant of the *Mod Squad* series, CBS still remained number one thanks to its established hits. Though probably inevitable, a major overhaul did not seem at all urgent to the network brass.

Just as CBS constantly went back to the farm to shore up its programming, ABC, the perennial third network in ratings, also turned to past strengths such as game shows whenever its latest gimmicks failed. With the exception of an occasional summer replacement, game shows had been largely absent from the networks' prime time schedules since the quiz show scandal of the late 1950s. This policy began to change in the fall of 1966 when, faced with replacing an instant flop (*The Tammy Grimes Show*), ABC promoted one of its daytime winners, *The Dating Game,* into the nighttime fold to act as a stop gap. Surprisingly, the show earned respectable ratings and, with its low production costs, proved a bargain for advertisers. *The Dating Game* was the first production effort of game show impresario Chuck Barris (a former ABC programming executive), and its prime time success was a breakthrough of sorts in the field. The program dispensed with the all-too-familiar Hollywood celebrity angle of other game shows and instead used nubile young women and handsome young men who were unknowns both to each other and to the audience. The premise was simple: One contestant tried to choose a perfect date from a trio of suitors hidden behind a stage wall by asking a series of specially prepared, slightly suggestive, questions. Though almost a direct copy of the ancient ABC Arlene Francis vehicle, *Blind Date,* the loosened moral standards since the late 1940s allowed *The Dating Game* to maintain a fairly blatant risqué tone. Barris immediately copied his own gimmick and produced the equally successful *Newlywed Game,* which had an even stronger

January 5, 1969

NET totally discontinues its use of the U.S. Postal Service to send shows to its affiliates, instead relying full time on the coast-to-coast coaxial cable for live transmissions.

February 17, 1969

Robert Wood becomes president of the CBS television network.

March 5, 1969

Ralph Roberts, who entered the cable TV business in 1963 by buying American Cable Systems Inc. (a Tupelo, Mississippi, system of 1,200 subscribers) reincorporates his company in Pennsylvania as Comcast Corporation (a mix of the words "communications" and "broadcast").

March 31, 1969

The CBS Morning News with Joseph Benti becomes the first hour-long daily network news show.

May 26, 1969

After receiving great reviews but low ratings for Dick Cavett's daytime talk show, ABC moves it to prime time, three days a week, for a three-month summer run.

May 26, 1969

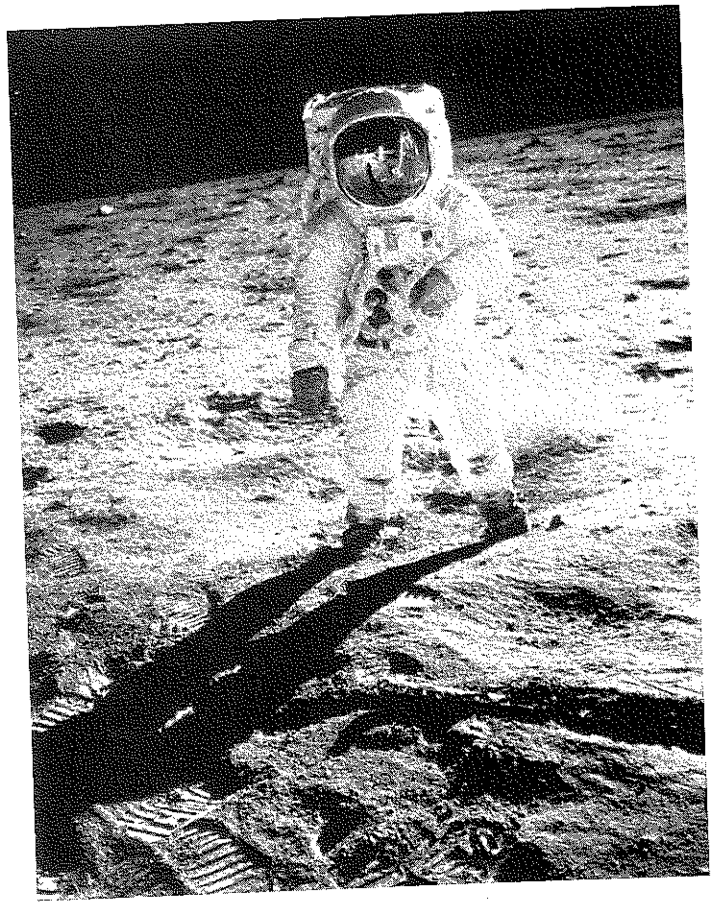
Av Westin, former *PBL* boss, becomes executive producer of ABC's nightly news. Howard K. Smith is promoted from commentator to co-anchor with Frank Reynolds.

July 7, 1969

The David Frost Show. Group W brings in David Frost to replace CBS-bound Merv Griffin on its syndicated talk program.

August 18, 1969

The Merv Griffin Show. (CBS). With the inauguration of Griffin's talk show on CBS, all three networks have nearly identical ninety-minute gabfests running opposite each other late night, Monday through Friday.



Walking on the moon, *Apollo 11* mission commander Neil Armstrong took this photo of fellow astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., the lunar module pilot. *(NASA)*

base in double-entendre. The two games became back-to-back brothers on the ABC schedule.

In November 1968, ABC scored a major game show coup by luring the four-year-old *Let's Make a Deal* from NBC. Although the show was a long-time smash in the daytime, NBC was reluctant to grant it prime time exposure, allowing only a brief summer run in 1967. When the network refused to give the show a second prime time run, its producers defected to ABC. Desperately in need of hit programs to build up its daytime strength, ABC was more than happy to place *Let's Make a Deal* in one of its many open slots in the evening as part of the deal. Though never much of a hit at night, *Let's Make a Deal* carried its loyal daytime audience to ABC and within months the network became number two behind CBS during the daytime.

Let's Make a Deal was a masterpiece in greed, dispensing with challenging questions and specialized knowledge in favor of pure luck. Otherwise respectable citizens stood in line for hours, dressed in ridiculous costumes, hoping for a good seat and the chance to catch host Monty Hall's attention. Hall chose the most oddly attired people in the studio audience as contestants and gave them the chance to wheel and deal their way to big bucks. He awarded them a small prize and then played on their natural greed in a series of increasingly valuable trades, offering visions of untold riches at the end if they would only deal the pittance they had for what lurked behind door number one, door number two, or door number three. Unlike programs such as *Twenty-One,* contestants took all their winnings to each new deal; one bad trade and they could lose everything. Nonetheless, *Let's Make a Deal* tapped the barely subconscious wish to strike it rich quick, and the series became a symbol of the successful excesses of the game show genre. It might not have been great art, but it was pure popular entertainment.

American commercial television has always been the embodiment of both crass and class. In 1969, the gelt gaucherie of *Let's Make a Deal* was the runaway hit of daytime TV, yet at the same time television delivered some of the most historic and poetic moments in its history as it presented the climax to the story of the conquest of space and the race to the moon. ABC's Jules Bergman, NBC's Frank McGee, and CBS's Walter Cronkite had been dutifully reporting the exploits in America's space program since the early 1960s, from the first sub-orbital flights to the launching of the behemoth *Saturn V* rocket. At first, the space launches produced very long programs that had very few visual highlights once the rocket had been launched. There were only voice transmissions and network mockups to fill the remaining hours. In late 1965, NASA began to allow live transmission of the splashdown and recovery procedure (starting with *Gemini 6*), but it was not until October 1968 that Americans were treated to the sight of their astronauts, live and in orbit, through signals sent from *Apollo 7*. The ever-improving technology that permitted live broadcasts from space, even from the capsule itself, at last allowed television to present the full impact and wonder of space exploration.

On the cold and snowy Christmas Eve of 1968, as millions gathered to celebrate Christmas, television shared with the nation, and the world, the excitement and the drama of the flight of *Apollo 8*, the first manned spaceship ever to orbit the moon. As the ship completed its first lunar orbit and emerged from the far side of the moon, mission control in Houston announced that contact had been reestablished with *Apollo 8*. Within seconds, an eerie but peaceful black and white image of the moon, close up, appeared on television. It was a sight never before witnessed by human eyes. Later that night, astronauts Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders presented another panorama of lunar landscape while reading from the book of *Genesis,* closing with, "God bless all of you on the good Earth."

Six months later, the three commercial networks followed the journey of the *Apollo 11* team of Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., remaining on the air over thirty continuous hours in order to show the first astronauts landing on the moon. On July 20, 1969, in preparation for the decent to the lunar surface, Armstrong and Aldrin entered the lunar module (dubbed the "Eagle"), which then separated from the command module and headed to the surface. At touchdown in the Sea of Tranquility Armstrong reported, "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed."

The actual landing of the lunar module was not televised but shortly before 11:00 P.M. (Eastern time), Armstrong pulled a string as he began to climb down the ladder of the module to the surface of the moon. A panel opened and a small TV camera followed his descent. The signal was transmitted to the orbiting command module, from there to an Earth-based antenna, then to NASA in Houston, and finally to the networks, thus allowing millions of people to see Armstrong descend the stairs and take the first step on the moon milliseconds after it actually occurred.

If those who struggled in the early part of the century to create television were to come back to life and ask how their invention was used, it would be wise to ignore every entertainment program ever broadcast and show them instead these moments from space. It has been estimated that between 300 million and three-fourths of one billion people either saw or heard Armstrong's descent, live. If ever there was a time that television fulfilled its creators' dreams and brought the world together in peace, this was it.

1969–70 SEASON

29. Effete and Impudent Snobs

SEX AND VIOLENCE: the twin tar babies of American television. No matter how much the public moralists decried what they saw as an excess of sex and violence on TV, as soon as their clamor died down network programmers once again returned to these two familiar standbys. Most of the outraged critics faded after a short time in the public spotlight, while the home audience continued to be drawn by the lure of programs that included healthy doses of sex and violence. So for nearly twenty years, through each cycle of outraged criticism, the networks and producers tried to sneak in as much as possible without disturbing too many vocal viewers or politicians with clout. However, Rhode Island's powerful senator, John Pastore, proved to be one of the more persistent in the long line of television critics. He chaired a series of well-publicized hearings in 1969 and demonstrated that he had no intention of just fading away. Consequently, the new fall schedule for 1969 turned into a schizophrenic mix of strategies devised to bypass governmental intrusion yet still produce hit shows.

Violent police sagas were an easy target for criticism, so the wave of new cop shows was stopped cold. Not one new policeman, spy, private eye, or reporter-as-cop appeared in the fall schedule. There were no new Westerns, either. What's more, even veteran shoot'em-ups such as *The Virginian* continued the one-punch mentality of the previous season, replacing the traditional bar room brawl with nonhuman violence such as turbulent cattle stampedes. The freezing of these two forms still left the networks searching for new ways to present the same sort of emotions. Crime shows and Westerns, with all their violent tendencies, were the perfect vehicles in which to depict basic human crises (love, hate, life, death, greed) in showcases that allowed a natural, dramatic climax of capture and justice. To replace the cowboys and the cops the networks turned to two formats that had flourished on TV in the early 1960s after the demise of ABC's Warner Bros. action-adventure fad, the doctors and the lawyers. Both professions also dealt with intriguing law breakers and heartbroken beauties, but the drama usually began immediately after the violence had taken place, so the action was verbal rather than physical, often resembling soap operas.

The soapiest of them all were the doctors, presented in three new shows: *Marcus Welby, M.D., Medical Center,* and *The Bold Ones.* These sudsy dramas were aimed directly at young adults and middle-aged women in the desirable 18 to 49 age demographic group. Each of the new series maintained the inviolable Casey-Zorba/Kildare-Gillespie arrangement of a young handsome medico for sexual interest and a sage mentor to serve as a voice of reason. The standard operating procedure in each episode also remained unchanged from the Casey-Kildare days as the angels in white sought to overcome the illnesses that had struck that week's celebrity guest stars in several unrelated cases. What had changed, though, was the by-then prerequisite injection of a hip with-it touch to make the series appear bold and modern. Even the traditional TV doctor conflict between brash youth and experienced elder was viewed as a convenient hook to use in exploiting the then current interest in the "generation gap."

CBS's *Medical Center* had young stalwart Dr. Joe Gannon (Chad Everett) champing at the bit placed on him by the chief surgeon, Dr. Paul Lachner (James Daly). Both men worked together, though, in dealing with the complex and exotic disorders that came their way, usually in the form of a beautiful, but troubled, woman. *The Doctors* segment of *The Bold Ones* cast E. G. Marshall as a chief neurosurgeon, considered a liberal innovator by his colleagues, who had to keep in check his even more headstrong protégés (John Saxon and David Hartman). On ABC, Marcus Welby, played by the consummate TV parent, Robert Young, fought to control the hot-blooded youthful exuberance of his dashing young aide (who even rode a motorcycle), Dr. Steven Kiley (James Brolin).

Young, a proven hand at dispensing philosophical TV homilies, played Dr. Welby as a father-confessor figure who operated from his own home rather than from a large, impersonal hospital. (The show could have easily been called "Doctor Knows Best.") Though the standard TV doctor illnesses such as amnesia, temporary blindness, and brain tumors received their usual exposure, previously taboo subjects such as abortion and venereal disease were added to the plots. The insertion of controversial issues was an ingenious ploy to lure the young audience and seemed to allow frank discussions of complex issues, though in reality the presentations were stacked in advance and the character of Welby was used to spout the established catechisms on the topics. The pregnant woman in the abortion program came to Dr. Welby only after she was almost killed by a sloppy back-alley butcher. Welby, of course, took the injured woman under his care, but was quick to point out that he felt an abortion had been the wrong choice to make in the first place. In facing the problem of sexually-transmitted diseases, Welby played the consummate guidance counselor, delivering frank but comforting lectures to the young-

FALL 1969 SCHEDULE

	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
MON	local	THE MUSIC SCENE	THE NEW PEOPLE		THE SURVIVORS		LOVE, AMERICAN STYLE		ABC
	local	Gunsmoke		Here's Lucy	Mayberry R.F.D.	Doris Day Show	Carol Burnett Show		CBS
	local	MY WORLD AND WELCOME TO IT	Rowan And Martin's Laugh-In		NBC Monday Night At The Movies # Bob Hope Show		# NBC Specials		NBC
TUE	local	The Mod Squad		MOVIE OF THE WEEK			MARCUS WELBY, M.D.		ABC
	local	Lancer		Red Skelton Hour		THE GOVERNOR AND J.J.	CBS News Hour 60 Minutes		CBS
	local	I Dream Of Jeannie	DEBBIE REYNOLDS SHOW	Julia	NBC Tuesday Night At The Movies # First Tuesday				NBC
WED	local	The Flying Nun	THE COURTSHIP OF EDDIE'S FATHER	ROOM 222	The ABC Wednesday Night Movie				ABC
	local	Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour		The Beverly Hillbillies	MEDICAL CENTER		Hawaii Five-O		CBS
	local	The Virginian			Kraft Music Hall		THEN CAME BRONSON		NBC
THR	local	The Ghost And Mrs. Muir	That Girl	Bewitched	This Is Tom Jones		It Takes A Thief		ABC
	local	Family Affair	JIM NABORS HOUR		CBS Thursday Night Movies				CBS
	local	Daniel Boone		Ironside		Dragnet 1970	Dean Martin Show		NBC
FRI	local	Let's Make A Deal	THE BRADY BUNCH	MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN	Here Comes The Brides		JIMMY DURANTE PRESENTS THE LENNON SISTERS HOUR		ABC
	local	Get Smart	The Good Guys	Hogan's Heroes	CBS Friday Night Movies				CBS
	local	The High Chaparral		The Name Of The Game			BRACKEN'S WORLD		NBC
SAT	local	The Dating Game	The Newlywed Game	Lawrence Welk Show		Hollywood Palace		local	ABC
	local	Jackie Gleason Show		My Three Sons	Green Acres	Petticoat Junction	Mannix		CBS
	local	Andy Williams Show		Adam-12	NBC Saturday Night At The Movies				NBC
SUN	Land Of The Giants		The FBI		The ABC Sunday Night Movie				ABC
	Lassie	TO ROME WITH LOVE	Ed Sullivan Show		LESLIE UGGAMS SHOW		Mission: Impossible		CBS
	Wild Kingdom	The Wonderful World Of Disney		BILL COSBY SHOW	Bonanza		THE BOLD ONES (THE DOCTORS; THE LAWYERS; THE PROTECTORS)		NBC

sters and their parents. They, in turn, responded with appropriate lines like "Who, me?" and "What? *My* child??" Thus, the show was able to reassure one side with the dead certainty of a Sunday school lesson while luring the other with the appearance of presenting progressive drama.

Though not at all violent, the new doctor shows could sneak in underlying sexual themes in the same way as the afternoon soap operas, by being all talk and no action. Other series, which could not wrap their titillation in the white robes of professional respectability, fared far worse. One of the major victims of the more stringent limitations on TV sex was an elaborately planned ABC series, *The Survivors,* another of the network's forays into the world of novels-for-television (succeeding *Peyton Place*, which faded from view in 1969). Produced by Universal and created by Harold Robbins, a master in the genre of broad-based sexy pulp fiction, the new series proposed to bring to television exciting sex-drenched dramas of the rich and playful jet set. ABC promised that Robbins would be closely involved in the production of the series and that the program would be a true television novel, presenting a different chapter of a continuing story each week. None of this ever happened. Just as the show was about to begin production in mid 1968, the sex and violence controversy flared and *The Survivors* was delayed until the fall of 1969. With the toned-down standards still in effect, the series was turned into a traditional television suspense thriller with soap opera touches. Consequently, the exploits of a powerful banking family were mixed with such sudsy daytime staples as pregnant unmarried damsels trying to hide their shame. The network also abandoned the concept of a TV novel storyline and settled for a stable, celebrity-studded continuing cast (Ralph Bellamy, Lana Turner, Kevin McCarthy, and George Hamilton), but the program did not survive its forced neutering. The show quickly went through three producers, lost its head star (Bellamy), and, by mid-season, was written off as a full-fledged flop. Despite ABC's major financial investment, the project was quickly disposed of, with an equally unsuccessful spinoff series, *Paris 7000* (starring the only cast holdover, George Hamilton, as an American playboy in Paris), fulfilling certain contractual arrangements between ABC and Universal Studios.

Another victim of the tighter production code was an NBC project with Twentieth Century Fox, *Bracken's World,* which ostensibly presented the behind-the-scenes lives and loves at a major Hollywood studio but was actually an excuse to expose as much of the nubile young starlets (including Karen Jensen, Linda Harrison, and Laraine Stephens) as the censors would allow. By the time *Bracken's World* began production in the spring of 1969, the stricter rules required the beautiful women to keep most of their clothes on. Though they flitted to and fro complying with the orders given by the off-camera unseen head of the studio, John Bracken (Leslie Nielsen), the stories were quite weak. Forced to rely on its dramatic content without maximum exposure of the aspiring but compliant female characters, *Bracken's World* folded after only one-and-a-half seasons.

The only new show to succeed with up-front sex in spite of such production limitations was ABC's *Love, American Style,* the first hit comedy anthology program on network TV. Since the early 1950s, the ratings domination by situation comedies in the *I Love Lucy* mold had convinced the networks that stable, familiar characters were essential in order to capture the fickle TV audience. *Love, American Style* broke from this assumption and presented three unconnected playlets that used guest stars exclusively. The only group of regulars turned up in the short comedy "quickies" that appeared between the individual playlets. The omni-present theme of love, as portrayed in the different humorous vignettes, held the program together.

Love, American Style did indeed display a freedom in topic and treatment above the traditional situation comedies and it worked hard at cultivating a risqué image. At heart, though, it was *very* respectable. There was talk of affairs, sleeping together, and premarital sex, but the Puritan ethic always triumphed and nothing salacious ever occurred either on or off camera. The program was a successful and effective transplant to TV of the Doris Day-Rock Hudson bedroom comedy films of the 1950s, with the same simple underlying premise: The courting rituals in America are in themselves hilarious and will seem so to the viewers when presented in a slightly exaggerated style. With an emphasis on rituals and games over the sex act itself, *Love, American Style* was the most representative example of permissible 1969 TV sex: Not only was it just all talk and no action, even the talk was not meant to be taken seriously. Occasionally the sugar-coated view of life became a bit too rich, but the program was generally funny and a genuinely successful innovation by ABC.

ABC and NBC were the only two networks actively experimenting with new forms in the 1969–70 season because CBS had decided to stand pat a while longer with its veteran sixty-minute variety shows and thirty-minute sitcoms. CBS had barely won the previous season and, in fact, had experienced noticeable difficulty in coming up with new hits during all of the late 1960s. Instead of trying much that was new, the network ended up relying on years of viewer loyalty to familiar formats and stars, assuming that people would come back to CBS after sampling the competition. In the fall of 1969, it looked as if this strategy was going to fail for the first time in more than a decade. CBS still had its hits, but there were enough successful regular series, movies, and specials on NBC and ABC to tip the balance in the overall ratings. NBC jumped into first place at the start of the season and remained there until New Year's, while ABC's new *Movie of the Week* occasionally hit number one in the weekly ratings. The new *Bill Cosby Show* sitcom and *The Bold Ones* career drama gave NBC a powerful Sunday night line-up. ABC turned out an intelligent new sitcom of its own, *Room 222,* and it received both critical praise and surprisingly good ratings against *The Beverly Hillbillies.*

Room 222 was a sharp break with both the rural slant of CBS's sitcoms and ABC's own trademark of mindless escapism. The series was topical and humorous while being only slightly sentimental in its portrayal of an integrated middle class urban high school. A largely unknown cast acted out believable stories with the focus on three excellent characters: a daffy white student-teacher (Karen Valentine), an understanding but much put-upon Jewish principal (Michael Constantine), and a black teacher of American history (Lloyd Haynes) whose classes were held in Room 222. They dealt with such dramatic issues as student rights and racial tension, but faced them with humor and more credibility than characters in such series as *The Mod Squad* or *Marcus Welby, M.D.* With its successful showing in the ratings, *Room 222* at last proved that more up-to-date settings could work very well in sitcoms, too.

In contrast to this successful momentum, all of CBS's new sitcoms failed, and even variety stalwarts such as Ed Sullivan and newcomer Jim Nabors were in the dumps. In January, NBC felt strong enough to order no changes in its prime time schedule and, by February, it looked as if CBS might actually lose the season to NBC. Faced with this awesome prospect, CBS's new president, Bob Wood, decided to take drastic steps to stay on top. The first phase was a full-court press to win the season in progress with a game plan designed by veteran CBS programming chief Mike Dann, and dubbed "Operation 100."

During the one hundred days remaining in the regular season (which ended in April), Dann countered NBC's regular programming and previously announced specials, slot by slot, night by night. He preempted weak shows such as *Get Smart* as often as possible, realizing that even a moderately successful special would probably register better ratings. The most striking aspect of Dann's counter-programming was that he used some very unusual material: previously run movies such as "Peyton Place" and "The African Queen," specials that had played years before (sometimes on competing networks), and documentary films from National Geographic. By packaging and promoting them as special events, CBS beat NBC at its own game. NBC had aired most of its blockbuster movies in building its fall lead and was unable to effectively counter the CBS moves. Dann's strategy violated CBS's traditional reliance on the strength of its regular series for success, but the plan worked. CBS managed to win by enough each week during the one-hundred days to boost the network's overall season average past NBC's, though just barely.

With his mission accomplished, Dann quit while he was ahead and went to work for the new noncommerical Children's Television Workshop. To replace him, CBS promoted its thirty-two-year-old wunderkind, Fred Silverman, head of the network's daytime programming since 1963. For seven years, Silverman had kept CBS so far ahead in daytime ratings and revenue that the network could afford a few close calls in the nighttime ratings.

The second phase of Wood's plan to retain the number one spot was the surprise axing of three still successful CBS series at the end of the 1969–70 season: *The Jackie Gleason Show, Petticoat Junction,* and *Red Skelton.* (Skelton moved over to NBC for one last season.) The rationale for these cancellations lay in the new shibboleth of TV programming: demographics. The total number of people viewing a program was no longer the most important consideration, but rather the kind of people watching. While Gleason, Skelton, and *Petticoat Junction* had maintained adequate ratings, they also served to reinforce the image of CBS as the network appealing primarily to old people and country folk rather than the advertisers' favorite segment of society: young marrieds in the 18 to 49 age bracket, preferably women because they made most of the domestic purchases. For the sin of appealing to the wrong types of Americans, Gleason, Skelton, and the gang at Hooterville became the first of the CBS veterans to walk the plank.

Though CBS was just coming to grips with the changing reality of television, the other two networks had begun to tinker with some firmly established traditions of prime time TV years before. Since the early 1960s, in fact, a number of network programmers (at NBC in particular) had been sliding back toward the all-but-abandoned anthology format to the extent that even some of the features of the British system, which emphasized limited run series, began turning up on American TV. Ninety-minute Westerns such as *The Virginian* and *Wagon Train* marked the first tentative

September 22, 1969
Music Scene. (ABC). David Steinberg hosts a rock version of *Your Hit Parade* (with some comedy thrown in), featuring on the first show James Brown, Three Dog Night, and a film of The Beatles with their latest hit, "Ballad of John and Yoko." The program is one of two back-to-back forty-five-minute shows, but the packaging strategy fails and both vanish by January.

September 26, 1969
The Brady Bunch. (ABC). A vapid suburban sitcom straight out of the 1950s. Robert Reed plays a widower (with three cute sons) who marries a widow (played by Florence Henderson) with three cute daughters. The combined family lives in a typical Los Angeles suburban house, complete with a dog, a cat, and a smart-aleck maid (played by Ann B. Davis).

October 5, 1969
Monty Python's Flying Circus. Meanwhile, back in Britain, the BBC uncovers five *David Frost Show* graduates (and one American) who take the *Laugh-In* formula beyond the fringe.

December 29, 1969
Dick Cavett becomes ABC's late night replacement for the slumping Joey Bishop.

January 1, 1970
Robert Sarnoff becomes chairman of the board at RCA as his father, seventy-nine-year-old David Sarnoff, is named honorary board chairman.

February 4, 1970
After seven years as CBS's daytime programming boss, Fred Silverman is promoted to the nighttime division, as an assistant to chief programmer, Mike Dann.

moves in this direction because the programs were, in effect, Western anthologies that primarily showcased weekly guest stars while carrying a few continuing characters. NBC's 1964 effort at a situation comedy anthology, *90 Bristol Court,* attempted to incorporate three half-hour sitcoms under one banner, with each segment dealing with that week's particular topic in a different way. It was an intriguing concept, but it turned out to be clumsy, poorly connected, and a total failure.

In the middle and late 1960s, the success of both prime time movies and made-for-TV movies (which were, after all, anthology series) provided the strongest impetus to break from the standard weekly format. *Name of the Game,* a spinoff from the successful made-for-TV movie, used its setup of three major characters alternating in the lead role to have, in effect, three different shows with the same general setting running in the same time slot. NBC extended this concept in 1969 with *The Bold Ones,* a series that alternated separate, totally unrelated segments in the same time slot (*The Doctors, The Lawyers,* and *The Protectors,* the last one eventually replaced by *The Senator*). NBC discovered that major stars such as Gene Barry, Tony Franciosa, Robert Stack (*Name of the Game*), E. G. Marshall (*The Doctors*), Burl Ives (*The Lawyers*), Leslie Nielsen (*The Protectors*), and Hal Holbrook (*The Senator*) were much more likely to agree to do a television series if they did not have to maintain the grueling production pace that a weekly sixty- or ninety-minute TV show required. This very practical consideration resulted in series with both a healthy diversity and many top stars, giving NBC potent programs to capture and keep an audience.

ABC took the almost inevitable next step with made-for-TV movies and gave the format its own ninety-minute weekly slot without any continuing segments at all, the Tuesday night *Movie of the Week* (the brainchild of twenty-seven-year-old ABC programming executive Barry Diller). Though not quite a return to *Studio One,* the program in effect brought the full-length weekly anthology format back to television several years after the death of the last limp remnants of the form, the *U.S. Steel Hour, Armstrong Circle Theater,* and *Chrysler Theater.* The move in the mid-1950s toward presenting series with popular, continuing characters had, by 1958, marked the end of the TV drama anthologies as an important creative force, but the success of made-for-TV movies demonstrated their renewed viability.

Actually, ABC's *Movie of the Week* more closely resembled the old *ABC Stage '67* show as it incorporated comedy and traditional specials, as well as adventure and drama, under its banner. Thus, material such as David Wolper's documentary film "The Journey of Robert F. Kennedy" joined bread-and-butter adventure-drama features such as "Seven in Darkness," which presented the struggle to safety by seven blind survivors of a jungle plane crash. In addition, the *Movie of the Week* slot served as an excellent showcase for thinly disguised pilot films of proposed regular series; *The Immortal* and *The Young Lawyers* were two such series given the go-ahead for the 1970–71 season following their successful feature film debuts.

NBC also increased its made-for-TV showcases, which the network labeled "world premieres" and inserted in its regular movie slots. Among the presentations were some fairly serious dramas that pulled off the very elusive TV trick of garnering both high ratings and strong critical praise. "Silent Night, Lonely Night," a Christmastime TV adaptation of Robert Anderson's Broadway play, was a tasteful and sensitive study of the pangs of desire between two married people (played by Lloyd Bridges and Shirley Jones) who decided to have a brief affair after one chance meeting. The two lovers were actually shown in bed together and, though they returned to their respective spouses at the end, neither was struck by some divine punishment for the transgression. Outside of the daytime soaps (which had been dealing with such encounters, and much more, for years), adultery had never received such favorable treatment in a work for television.

One month later, NBC presented "My Sweet Charlie," a novel-turned-play produced and adapted for television by Richard Levinson and William Link (the creators of *Mannix*). The story was a sensitive portrayal of a chance encounter inter-racial romance—an even more precedent shattering situation than "Silent Night, Lonely Night." Patty Duke played a runaway unwed teenage mother driven by a hurricane to seek shelter in a deserted house. There she encountered a fugitive black activist (Al Freeman) and the two outsiders lovingly shared each other's burdens, discovering that they had a great deal in common. With the passing of the storm, though, their utopia evaporated and the real world entered, breaking them apart. As a sign of the changing times, the kind portrayal of an unwed teenage mother (a very controversial concept only a few years before) was all but overlooked as attention focused on the first black-white romance in TV history. "My Sweet Charlie" won three Emmys and, more important, both it and "Silent Night, Lonely Night" did surprisingly well in the ratings. "My Sweet Charlie," in fact, emerged as the highest rated movie on television that year. The message from the ratings success of these innovative stories was that the television audience was evidencing a noticeable rise in the level of its tolerance and sophistication, a development many TV detractors had claimed would never take place.

Accompanying this change was an increase in the number of viewers tuning in programs on public television's NET network. NET had learned from *PBL* that its success as a network rested with shows that were at least structured like commercial network programs so that the audience would give them a chance. In the 1969–70 season it clicked with two such well-produced series, *Sesame Street* and *The Forsyte Saga. Sesame Street* was a product of the new Children's Television Workshop and began life as an eight million dollar, twenty-nine week television "head start" program aimed at preschool children, especially those in the urban ghettos. The program attempted to teach basic concepts of letters and numbers by using the technique of exciting, constant repetition pioneered by TV commercials. Program headliners such as Jim Henson's colorful muppet characters including the Cookie Monster, Big Bird, and Bert and Ernie elaborated on the basic lessons, adding their own humorous interpretations of the facts. *Sesame Street* was entertaining, educational, and an instant success with adults as well as children, lasting far longer than the originally planned twenty-nine weeks. (It was still going strong after twenty-nine *years.*) The show brought invaluable attention to the other less frenetic features of the NET schedule and boosted the ever-present funding drives as well.

The twenty-six-week *Forsyte Saga* began a Sunday night run on NET in October 1969, following its smash hit appearances in England in 1967 and, again as a rerun, in 1968. *The Forsyte Saga* was an expensive adaptation of John Galsworthy's novels, following the lives, loves, and losses of a respectable upper class Victorian family over fifty years and three generations. Production and acting in the series were first rate and the historical setting was quite impressive. At heart, though, the series was really just a high-gloss soaper, containing all the ingredients of a period soap opera: dashing young men, beautiful young women, a scheming old skinflint, extra-marital affairs, and a complicated continuing storyline. Nevertheless, American viewers who would never be caught dead watching *As the World Turns* considered *The Forsyte Saga* classy and morally uplifting because it was British and on "educational" TV. They bragged about following the weekly Sunday night exploits of the Forsyte family, encouraging their friends to tune in as well. Consequently, the 167 NET stations carrying the program noticed a sizable increase in their Sunday night audiences and they began looking for programs with the same type of attraction. In the fall of 1970, *Masterpiece Theater* was created (with the help of substantial grants from the Mobil Oil Corporation) to present British-made historical dramas on a regular basis, every Sunday night. The program, hosted by *Omnibus* alumnus Alistair Cooke, began with *The First Churchills* and then moved on, in subsequent years, to other Anglophile sagas such as *Elizabeth R* and *Upstairs, Downstairs.* The limited-run imported series brought the individual NET stations large audiences and projected an air of classy success. They also made the expense and bother of producing similar domestic programs seem less and less worthwhile, thus beginning NET's extended parasitic dependence on British television.

In 1969, though, NET was still producing several excellent programs of its own, including *The Advocates, NET Playhouse,* and *Hollywood Television Theater. The Advocates* presented a debate of controversial issues argued courtroom-style by knowledgeable experts from both sides. *NET Playhouse* turned out dramatic productions such as "The Trail of Tears," an unflinching portrait of American persecution of the Cherokee Indians in the 1830s, starring Johnny Cash and Jack Palance. Perhaps NET's best dramatic production of the year appeared on the May 17, 1969, premiere of *Hollywood Television Theater,* the lavishly funded successor to *NET Playhouse.* George C. Scott directed a new production of "The Andersonville Trial," a 1959 Saul Levitt play that dramatized the Nuremberg-like post-Civil War trial of the commander of an inhuman prisoner of war camp. Scott himself had starred in the original Broadway production but for the new television version, recorded live on tape, Richard Basehart, Jack Cassidy, and William Shatner took the leads in the thought-provoking debate on moral responsibility.

NET's production style was much closer to the fondly remembered live drama of such vehicles as *Playhouse 90* than the generally action-oriented made-for-TV movies on the commercial networks. Though such programs as *Hollywood Television Theater* were not going to spark a revival of *Studio One* on commercial television, NET's programming was at last providing something of a real alternative to the lock-step TV world of CBS, NBC, and ABC. NET's programming wound up having an effect on long-range planning by the commercial television executives. With public television viewing on the rise, they began using NET as a test ground for formats and ideas they feared might not yet be ready for a commercial run. NET had truly become a force to reckon with, not only by the commercial networks but by the government itself.

May 8, 1970
The FCC adopts the Financial Interest and Syndication rules (the "Fin-Syn" rules). These severely limit the networks from retaining any financial interest in the rerun syndication rights of programs they air and prohibit them from maintaining in-house syndication divisions. The Fin-Syn rules do not fully go into effect until 1973.

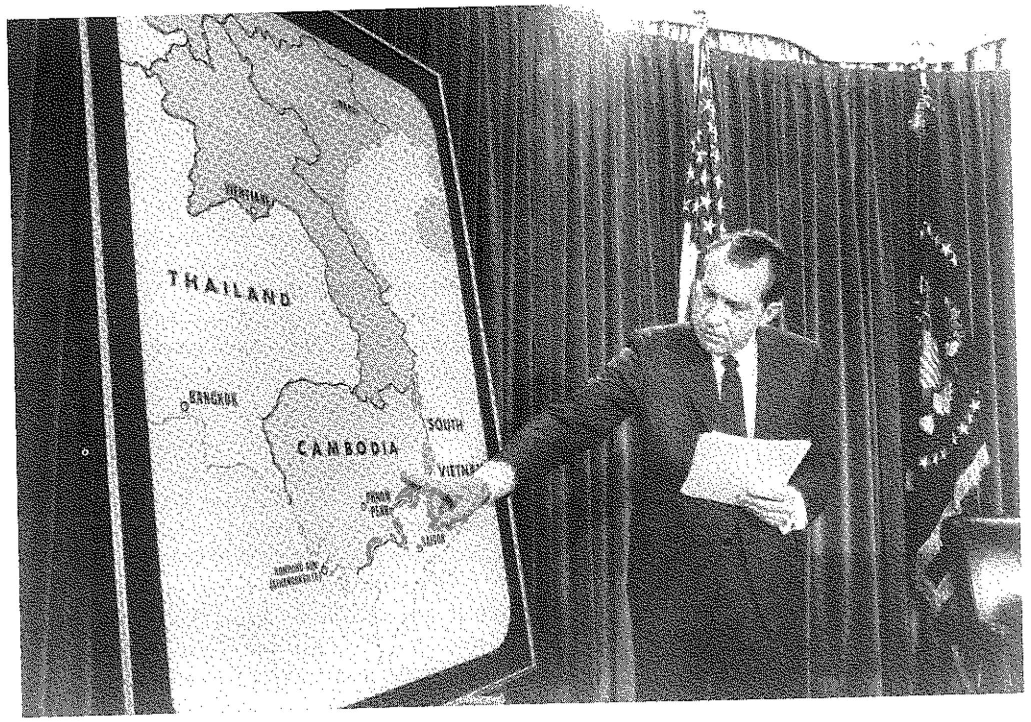
June 22, 1970
Fred Silverman succeeds Mike Dann as programmer #1 at network #1.

July 8, 1970
The Smothers Brothers Summer Show. (ABC). The brothers sneak back onto television for a summer series with some of their old crew and a few new faces (including Sally Struthers). They avoid becoming embroiled in topical controversies but also fail to rekindle their popularity with viewers. As a result, their program is not picked up for a regular fall season run.

July 16, 1970
Nearly ten years after Ed Murrow's "Harvest of Shame" documentary, Martin Carr's "Migrants" shows how little has changed for American migrant workers.

July 31, 1970
Chet Huntley says "goodnight" to David Brinkley for the last time, with the hope that "there will be better and happier news, one day, if we work at it." On August 3, John Chancellor and Frank McGee join Brinkley for the new *NBC Nightly News* format.

September 27, 1970
Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour, television's longest running entertainment show, gets the gong. Age: 22 years. During its last ten years, the show had been relegated to a Sunday afternoon slot on CBS.



President Richard Nixon announced the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in a prime time television speech on April 30, 1970. *(National Archives)*

Since the mid-1960s, NET had been the boldest network in producing public affairs programs and documentaries. During that time, it managed to avoid most governmental interference because of its minuscule audience and minor budget requirements. As the network became more influential and more dependent on government funding, this began to change. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) began to feel pressure from the Nixon administration to reduce clearly anti-administration material. A number of public TV stations became very nervous about airing any possibly inflammatory programs at all. In February 1970, WETA in Washington refused outright to show "Who Invited Us?" on *NET Journal.* This program was a heavy-handed portrait of U.S. foreign policy as a strategy strongly influenced by the CIA and private corporations in order to further their own interests (a theme certain to irk the Nixon administration). With governmental funding becoming a major factor in NET finances, it seemed foolish to antagonize the people who had a strong say in just how much money Congress voted for public television. Though home viewers and private corporations such as the Ford Foundation and Mobil Oil still donated freely to NET, the network faced mounting costs such as AT&T line charges as it began to operate more and more like a real network and to distribute some of its shows via the national coaxial cable connections. With the Nixon people sorting out friends from enemies, the CPB began noticeably kowtowing to the administration in a manner reminiscent of the commercial networks at the height of President Johnson's influence.

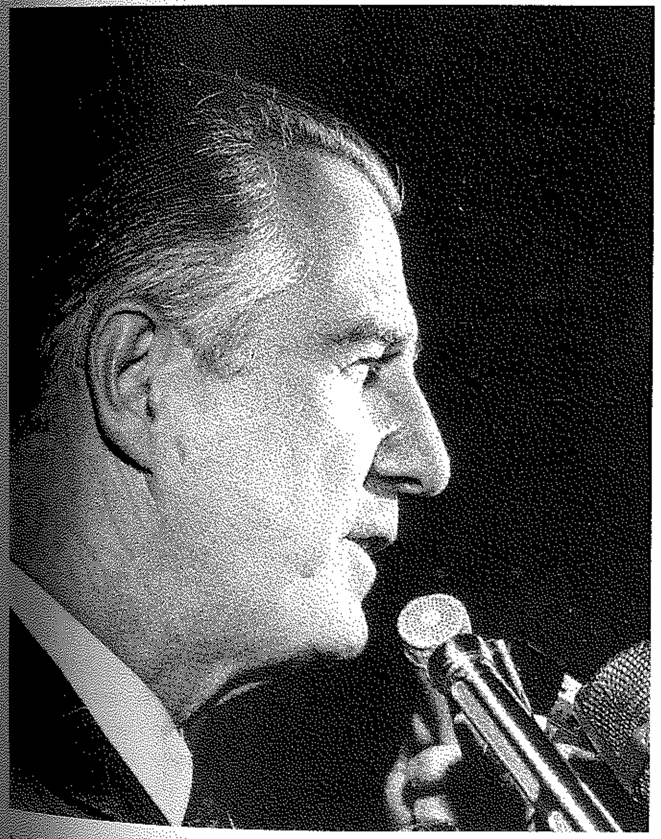
In contrast to public television's pullback, the commercial networks, which had been rebuilding their commitment to hard-hitting news after the "no guts journalism" era of a few years before, regained the courage to air a few truly controversial documentaries. The Black Panthers, a prime target of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, became the subject of reports on both CBS and ABC in the 1969–70 season. CBS's story led the network into an aggravated battle with the Justice Department, which issued a subpoena for the outtakes from the filmed interviews with Panther leaders. Under protest, CBS surrendered the leftover film, though it's doubtful the FBI found any nefarious plot or revealing off-the-cuff remark in the scraps from the cutting room floor. Nonetheless, when ABC did its report a few months later, the network could not guarantee that the same thing would not happen to its films, so only Panther boss David Hilliard agreed to speak on camera. As a final frustration for the network, the Justice Department then refused to provide anyone to give the government's side of the Panther issue. Despite these limitations, the ABC report was an effective overview of the group and it served as a high point of the network's short-lived new prime time public affairs series, *Now* (hosted by Edward P. Morgan).

NBC, which was usually content to cover safer subjects such as "The Great Barrier Reef," tackled the politically volatile story of migrant farm workers in an *NBC White Paper* produced and directed by Martin Carr, "Migrants." The program was an effective followup to Carr's own previous report (on CBS) in 1968, "Hunger in America," which itself had been a followup to Ed Murrow's 1960 "Harvest of Shame." The most amazing aspect of the new reports was that so little had changed since Murrow's first story on the agricultural workers, both in the fields and behind the scenes. Like its predecessors, "Migrants" took a tough stand and named some major American corporations as being responsible for keeping the migrant workers close to starvation in the world's most bountiful land. It showed a representative of the Coca-Cola company, which owned a large citrus farm, physically breaking up an interview with a tenant who lived in one of the company's filthy shanties. As in the past, the crop growers cried "foul" and exerted intense pressure on NBC to keep the show off the air, labeling it "sneaky journalism." Despite the pressure, the report aired, albeit in the middle of July, without any commercial time sold, and with some affiliates refusing to show it anyway.

In spite of these incidents of bravery, network journalism was forced to take a step backwards in the 1969–70 season as the networks and the Nixon administration locked horns on the most troubling issue of all, the Vietnam War. On October 15, 1969, antiwar forces throughout the country held rallies as part of what was called Moratorium Day. As with the march on the Pentagon two years earlier, CBS was reluctant to devote much coverage to the protests. For Moratorium Day, however, NBC took the initiative and scheduled an 11:30 P.M. wrapup, so CBS did the same. Even this small dose of publicity given to the demonstrators irked Nixon and the president seemed convinced that the press, particularly the television press, was out to sabotage his administration. The next month he saw even further evidence that the "hands off" honeymoon with the news media had certainly come to an end.

On Monday, November 3, Nixon delivered an appeal directly to the viewing public in a half-hour speech that outlined his new Vietnamization policy and asked for support from "the great silent majority of my fellow Americans." Nixon promised his new strategy would eventually lead to the withdrawal of all American ground combat forces and leave South Vietnam to fight the ground war on its own. The speech ended at 10:05 P.M. As usual, the networks had received advance texts of the address a few hours before airtime, and their correspondents stood by for the traditional post-speech commentary and analysis. NBC and CBS devoted ten minutes each to the discussion and then returned to their scheduled programming. One CBS reporter observed that the President's Vietnamization program really offered nothing new and would simply mean an intensification of the American air war. ABC, which ran its report until 10:30, called on other political figures, as well as its own correspondents, for comments, reactions, and analysis. Veteran Democrat Averell Harriman, a former chief negotiator at the Vietnam peace talks, took the opportunity to delivery some harsh criticisms of Nixon's handling of both the war and the ever-stalled peace talks.

This public disagreement and criticism immediately following his own speech seemed to be the final straw for Nixon. He decided to launch a strong counter-attack before the networks had a chance to give the protesters any more free air time during the Moratorium II activities scheduled for November 15. The networks were warned that "it would be wise" to cover, live, a speech by Vice President Spiro Agnew at a Republican party conference in Des Moines on November 13. They did. At 7:00 P.M., speaking on CBS, NBC, and ABC, Agnew launched a vituperative attack on these same networks. Before the highly partisan crowd, he criticized the fact that "a small group of men, numbering perhaps no more than a dozen anchormen, commentators, and executive producers" decided what appeared on the nightly network news shows. They comprised, he said, an "unelected elite," an "effete corps of impudent snobs," primarily based in the East, who held a monopoly on the national dissemination of news and opinion. Agnew specifically criticized the "instant analysis" that followed President Nixon's November 3 speech, implying that, coming immediately after the President's address, the remarks were inadequately prepared and therefore of less value to the public. (He did not point out, of course, that the networks had received advance texts of the speech hours before airtime.) Significantly, Agnew exempted the local affiliates from blame because they merely found themselves in the position of broadcasting whatever the networks sent down the line.



In late 1969, Vice President Spiro Agnew launched a strong attack against the networks, criticizing the slant of their news broadcasts. *(National Archives)*

The Agnew speech, largely authored by presidential speechwriter Patrick Buchanan, was a deliberate declaration of war by the Nixon administration against the networks. The administration realized that, aside from limited behind-the-scenes pressure, there was very little it could do to force the networks to toe the line. Instead, in a brilliant divide-and-conquer strategy, it aimed for the networks' Achilles' heel. By appealing to the American public and, in particular, to the local affiliates, the administration sought to polarize vague anti-TV news feelings and resentments that had developed throughout the decade, sharpening them into a clear-cut "us versus them" conflict. The networks were thereby outnumbered. If local affiliates began demanding a softening of network tone, then the three majors would have to listen. At the end of Agnew's speech, NBC and ABC immediately returned to regular programming. CBS read a short prepared reply and then pulled out as well. Two days later, there was no special coverage of the Moratorium II activities on any of the networks. On November 20, in Montgomery, Alabama, Agnew added two more names to his enemies' list, identifying the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* as part of the same "Eastern liberal establishment."

For the administration, Agnew's Des Moines speech was a tremendous success. Not only had the networks' tone softened immediately in its aftermath, but the tenor of public debate had turned around. Agnew's speech had touched a responsive nerve in the American public and the networks were on the defensive, trying to prove their innocence while the government called the shots. In January 1970, the president ended the practice of supplying advance texts of his speeches and distributed them just before air time instead to ensure a reduction in instant analysis. In addition, Nixon aides began leaking stories suggesting that several network reports that placed either the American war effort or the South Vietnamese government in a bad light were trumped up. Richard Salant, president of CBS News, said, "there is an official smear campaign under way to dissuade us from telling the truth as we see it." To counter charges of distortion leveled against one particular story on South Vietnamese atrocities, CBS was fortunate enough to have interviews with the soldiers involved, corroborating the network's story on prisoner mutilation. Nonetheless, the attacks continued and, on another front, individuals with strong ties to the administration (and President Nixon personally) filed a challenge with the FCC to take away a Miami television station owned by the *Washington Post.*

On April 30, Nixon delivered a prime time address announcing an American invasion of Cambodia. Following the speech, the networks offered almost no commentary at all. A wave of student protests (punctuated by the killing of four students at Kent State University) could not be ignored for long, though, and all three networks did prime time wrapups of a major Washington demonstration on May 9, which marked the culmination of the reaction to the invasion. The TV reports presented speakers from both sides and went to extraordinary lengths to appear balanced and nonbiased. However, as if to "balance" the very coverage of such an event, CBS (after some outside pressure) agreed to also do a similar prime time wrapup of a pro-administration rally held in Washington on Honor America Day, July 4. NET, also feeling pressure from the White House, gave Honor America Day extensive air time. During all the public reaction to the invasion, both the electronic and print press generally accepted the administration's assertion that the invasion be referred to as the Cambodian "incursion."

Nearly two years after he had vowed to bring the country together, Richard Nixon presided over a highly divided nation, torn apart by the war in Indochina. The television networks were also in a very difficult position, facing pressure from all sides. The government wanted them to "go along" with the official line and was not hesitant to use its muscle. Affiliates were critical and nervous. Yet there was a reawakened conscience in the network news departments and, even in the face of general viewer apathy, they produced incisive news specials and daily reports on the war which only further piqued the administration's anger.

The born-again news team at CBS was especially effective, gathering first hand reports from the war front itself. John Laurence's sixty-minute portrait of an American infantry unit (called C -Company) revealed that there were clear anti-war feelings present even among America's fighting men. Another CBS special, ”Where We Stand in Indochina,“ presented unflattering interviews with Vietnamese generals as CBS's correspondents concluded that, at best, the American invasion of Cambodia was a mistake. Yet in spite of the networks' attempts to reassert their journalistic integrity in covering the important events of the year, all of the season's Vietnam and public affairs specials found their usual place at the very bottom of the ratings tabulations, with the special ”Ethics in Government“ coming in, somehow appropriately, dead last.

1970-71 SEASON

30. Totally Committed and Completely Involved

"WE'RE PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER this fall on CBS!" "Let's get together on ABC!" "It's happening on NBC!" That's what the networks told their viewers again and again through the summer of 1970. Campus revolt and the rock generation were reaching a high water mark and youth-oriented shows, which had been bubbling under the surface for about four seasons with increasing success, seemed to hold the key to the new ratings emphasis on audience demographics. The type of person watching had become increasingly important because the total television audience often included a great number of viewers who were judged to be too old or too rural for advertisers' tastes. Determined to win the attention of those in their late teens and twenties, all three networks decided to cast their lot with the kids and they proclaimed the arrival of the new season as heralding something completely different. Everything would be "Now"! Variations on phrases from then-current teen slang such as "getting it all together" and "what's happening" filled the networks' ads and show descriptions. This effusive commitment to "telling it like it is" led to one of the shortest format cycles in television history, "relevancy."

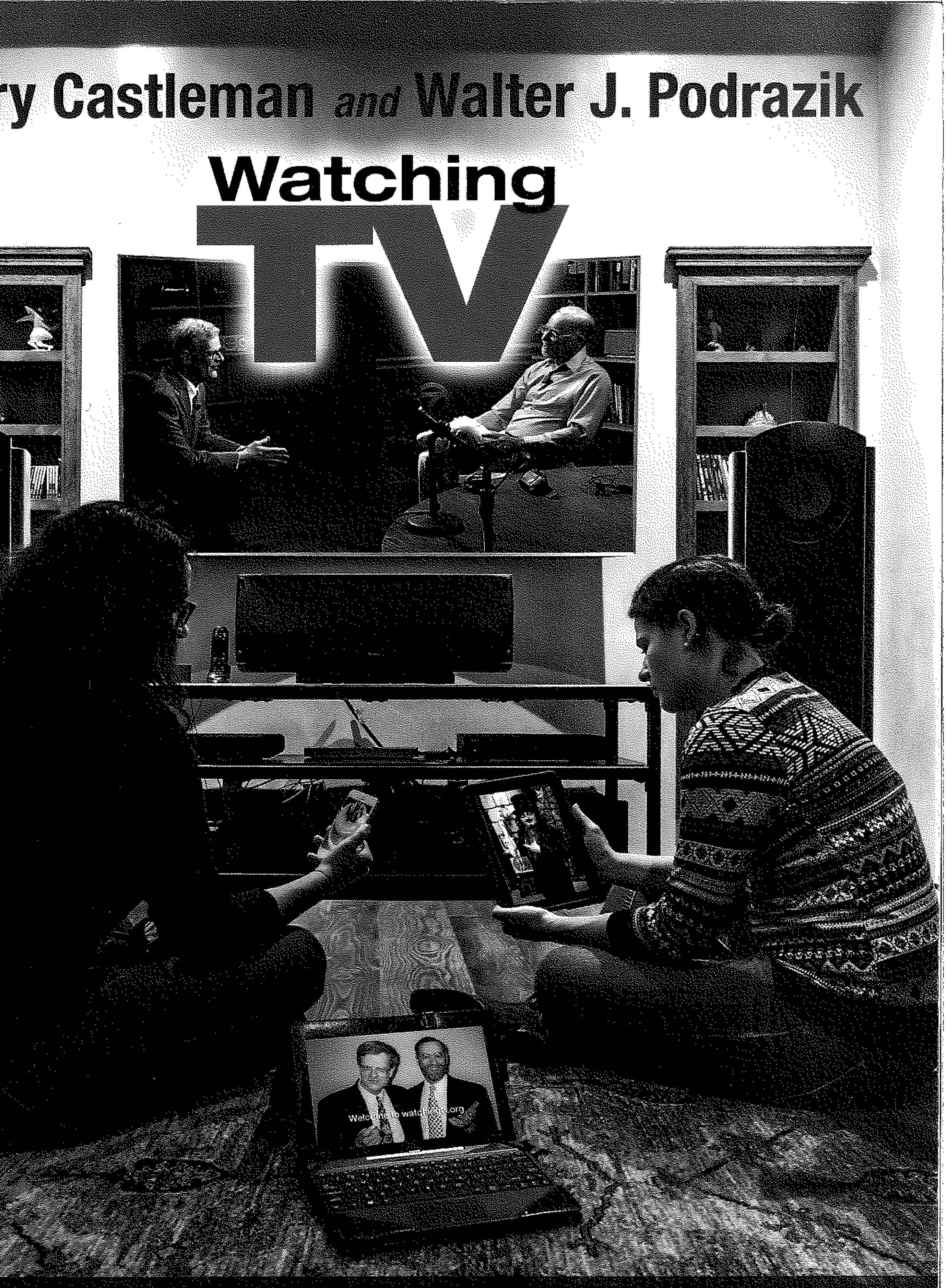
Despite all the rhetoric, the networks' self-proclaimed dedication to relevancy in programming really meant TV relevancy, a far cry from anything in the real world. It consisted of grafting the head of topical issues onto the body of standard grade-B drama and restocking familiar forums such as hospitals and court rooms with different, preferably youthful, characters. ABC had attracted lightning with this formula in *The Mod Squad* and *Marcus Welby, M.D.* and each of the networks rushed to include as many hip phrases, committed characters, and timely conflicts as possible. CBS in particular pursued the trend with a vengeance, apparently out to prove that it was no longer the network of the fuddy-duddies. To the god of youth it offered *Headmaster, The Interns,* and *Storefront Lawyers.* All three received "thumbs down."

Headmaster was a well-intentioned but poorly executed comedy-drama that cast veteran Andy Griffith as Andy Thompson, headmaster at a small private high school in California. In many ways, Griffith was a perfect choice for making relevancy work. He had spent eight years cultivating an image as a warm, level-headed folksy sheriff who was respected by old and young alike, and it was a short step to his new role as a Welby-ish father-confessor. In a setting reminiscent of ABC's moderately successful high school sitcom of the previous season, *Room 222,* Griffith took on the timely concerns of his troubled wards, trying to guide them through brewing campus revolt and drug overdoses. Unfortunately, the scripts and supporting cast generally lacked the control and subtlety of *Room 222* and the relevant problems clashed with the stock sitcom humor of such characters as the school's athletic coach, played by the slapstick-oriented Jerry Van Dyke. As a result, *Headmaster* emerged as a mish-mash of emotion that made the program appear a cheap vehicle simply attempting to cash in on "today's headlines."

The Interns presented the lives, loves, and labors of five sparkling clean doctors-in-training (three white, one black, one blonde) at a major Los Angeles hospital, and brought the relevancy angle to a format that was quite well suited for soapy topical melodrama. The program religiously adhered to the traditional *Ben Casey-Dr. Kildare* structure including a wise elder statesman and three guest patients each week, but the new divinities of youth and relevance raised their unwieldy influence at every turn. As a result, the show was not merely heavy-handed, it was often ludicrous in its emphasis. In their spiffy attire and perfectly set *coiffures,* the interns looked more like hairdressers than medicos. Their supposedly wise mentor (played by that old highway patrolman, Broderick Crawford) was presented as being no match for the wisdom of youth and he alternated between sagacity and surliness. Above all, the patient ailments were absurd. On one show, they included: a go-go dancer who was bedridden with a twisted foot; a former girlfriend of one of the wavy-haired interns who begged for the mercy killing of her sick husband; and a meditative monk who not only needed his physical illness cured but his political consciousness reawakened (a task handled by the black intern). For added topicality, this very same episode included a subplot that focused on a bearded orderly who was arrested for peddling pornographic movies. Through it all the happy-go-lucky interns, like their comrades in the Mod Squad, stood by the traditional rules and routine, determined to help trendy youth come to grips with the flawed but ultimately manageable establishment.

The mixed bag of topical drama, youth, and good old American tradition in these relevant shows aimed at scoring the TV hat trick of *The Mod Squad:* Bring in the oldsters with exciting all-American action; win praise for presenting topical drama; and capture the youth market with stories the kids could relate to. In this approach, *Headmaster* and *The Interns* were merely indelicary Castleman *and* Walter J. Podrazik

Watching TV



t Decades of American Television