Dr. Binkley

See "Fannin Doctrine"

Staff Report

Sen Subc. Comm

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MR The Media Report

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INSIDE THE MEDIA

After over a year of off-the-record gossiping and mutterings by the cliquish members of the White House press corps, Newsweek Magazine (Nov. 24) has quietly (and carefully) used its Ronald Reagan cover story to launch an item that has Washington buzzing. Referring to frequent difficulties President Ford has in delivering speeches on the campaign trail, Newsweek wrote the following: "He fumbles words. He drifts from his text and loses his place. He butchers gags and blows punch lines. He enjoys a pre-prandial drink with the boys, like any politician on the road, and occasionally shows it in his post-prandial speeches." These words were not chosen haphazardly. Newsweek's Washington Bureau Chief Mel Elfin told MR "We think it was handled with discretion...a touch of grace. We didn't say the President was a drunk. It was a question of whether the President has a drink or two." If this subject has been the topic of conversation in the White House press for several months, why hasn't it been published before now, we asked Elfin. "The press has a tendency to wait until somebody else does it. At certain points, certain information becomes relevant," Elfin said. However, now that Newsweek has broached this sensitive issue in print, it's only a matter of time before other news organizations will follow suit...probably in much greater detail. A White House wire service reporter was quoted as saying "this was the first crack in the dyke." Presidential press secretary Ron Nessen, known to be unhappy about the reference to his boss's social habits, was relieved when the issue wasn't raised at any of the daily briefings this past week. Other nervous W.H. reporters told MR that they weren't ready, just yet, to talk about the subject. "I'm still not prepared to say it publicly" one radio newsman admitted. However, Newsweek's Elfin thinks that the upcoming campaign will be different from those in the past. "We intend to cover the President and other candidates in all aspects, including behavior pattern and habits. Character will become central. We have overlooked those things in the past, and it is not good enough anymore. The stuff that is common parlance to reporters is not known in the countryside," he said.

West Coast media observers are watching with interest the battle for advertising dollars going on in the Los Angeles area between two of the nation's largest publishing companies. The Valley News and Green Sheet, purchased by the Tribune Co. of Chicago in December of 1973, is beginning to cut in on the Los Angeles Times' growth factor in southern California's San Fernando Valley area. The Tribune company moved its own management team into the hierarchy of the Valley News (4th largest in ad lines in California) in July of this year, and during the past three months, they've mounted a big push to increase circulation. Valley News advertising manager Tom Culligan, formerly in the same department at the Chicago Tribune, told MR paid circulation has "increased 12% since the campaign began." The Valley News currently has 65,000 paid customers with 205,000 copies distributed free throughout the area. The newspaper is published four times a week (T.,Th., F.,Sun.) but according to Culligan, "we're looking seriously at moving to five days a week in the next year and maybe six in two years." However, he said, "We don't

have plans to move to seven." The L.A. Times is very much aware that the Valley News is on the move. Their general manager was quoted in the Nov. 17 Ad Age as saying "Obviously, they're going to be attempting to generate additional advertising revenue and there are only so many advertising dollars, so they will be providing probably more intensive competition. But it's a good paper...we're certainly not oblivious to what's going on." Culligan says they are looking at only a circulation growth rate in the next two years of only around 5%, although the paper hopes to reach a 50% paid circulation during this period. Another example of the suburban squeeze...

It's becoming more evident everyday that both the Republican and Democratic parties -- for different reasons -- will have a large group of unhappy reporters covering their respective conventions next summer. At the GOP convention in Kansas City, hotel accomodations will leave a lot to be desired, and for the Democrats in New York's Madison Square Garden, space for non-network reporters is being kept to 5,000 square feet for an expected 1700 broadcasters. Mutual's Bill Greenwood, current President of the Radio and Television Correspondents' Association, told MR that he is "very upset" about the situation, but says "it's take or leave it." It appears that in New York only the large television networks will have the proper space to adequately cover the convention. But to make matters worse, the Statler-Hilton, the official convention headquarters hotel, does not have dial telephones in the rooms, and one recent visitor reported it took six minutes to get an operator.

Look for new controversy to flare up in the coming year over the role of the media -- especially television -- in undercutting U.S. success in the Vietnam war. Freedom House is about to publish a massive 2-volume work by Peter Braestrup entitled "Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet-1968 in Vietnam and Washington." The analysis of Braestrup -- an ex-Washington Post reporter who now serves as editor of publications for Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars at the Smithsonian -- lends support to the earlier analyses of Edward Jay Epstein that whereas the major media had played a big role in boosting the war (and early war strategy), they turned the other way during and after the Tet offensive and undercut U.S. homefront opinion. The Freedom House book also includes documentation of changes in public opinion by pollster-analyst Burns W. Roper. The general verdict of "Big Story": "First news reports are always partly wrong; in the reporting of Tet -- which included some courageous, thoughtful coverage -- much was wrong." Put this Tet coverage analysis together with the other heavy analysis of media coverage now taking shape viz politics and TV news, and the seeds of some important political reactions are being sown -- the writings of the next few years may do for the big media what Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" did for the meatpacking industry.

If you're dubious about media usage surveys that show too much usage and too much attention, Detroit's Market Opinion Research turned up some interesting patterns in recent survey data. All media get only partial attention. Here's MOR's breakdown for assessing some of the puffed-up audience/readership data:

Newspapers (100% = 150)		Television (100% = 150)		Radio (100% = 150)	
Look at	63.9%	Turn on TV	77.0%	Turn on radio	75.4%
(If yes)		(If yes)		(If yes)	
Flip through	45.9	Different channels	29.5	Switch stations	19.7
Read a few	55.7	Watched parts	45.9	Specific programs	42.6
Read carefully	24.5	Watch a show/newscast	59.0	Listen over 1/2 hour	36.1
		Complete attention	32.8	Complete attention	8.2

MEDIA AND MONOPOLY POWER

Two new books published this month are being received with something less than enthusiasm in New York/Washington communications industry circles.

Former Nixon speechwriter turned newspaper columnist Patrick Buchanan devotes a chapter in his book titled "Conservative Votes, Liberal Victories" to the subject "Can Democracy Survive the New Journalism?" He writes: "The political power of America's media monopolies such as CBS, Time-Life, Inc. and the Washington Post Company -- welded to the growing ideological fervor of their correspondents, writers and commentators -- represent the most formidable obstacle in the path of a conservative counter-reformation in the United States." Buchanan -- whose book ironically is being published by Quadrangle, the New York Times book company -- says "The essence of press power lies in the authority to select, elevate and promote one set of ideas, issues and personalities -- and to ignore others." He lists the following as what he calls "a few trademarks of the New Journalism: 1) post-Vietnam, there is a discernable anti-military bias permeating what is spoken and written by the national press; 2) the new journalist bears a Naderite grudge against big business; 3) the media has a bias for federal social spending -- the more, the better; 4) there is an abiding conviction that no matter the controversy or conflict involved, the federal government should continue to use its coercive power to integrate schools and communities; 5) the national press is the silent partner of the political and social movements of liberalism -- consumerism, civil rights, environmental, anti-war and women's liberation." Buchanan suggests that the nature of the medium of television may be the conservative politician's biggest problem. "There is a genuine question whether any conservative politician can rivet the camera's attention without ceasing to be, strictly speaking, a conservative." However, Buchanan also attacks a segment of the society normally thought to be in the conservative camp. He notes, "Big Business, which holds the purse strings and has the power to effect change, has all the enthusiasm for combat of the Royal Laotian Army. It tolerates the conspicuous anti-business bias of the networks, because the latter provides a national audience for business commercials. And that means more products sold, and higher profits all around."

Stanford Professor Bruce M. Owen, writing about the big media from an economist's point of view, says "It is certainly true that the monopoly media were responsible for the decision to publicize the Watergate scandals, but it is not clear that this took extraordinary degree of courage." In his just-published book "Economics and Freedom of Expression: Media Structure and the First Amendment" (Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger), Owen suggests "the original stories in the Washington Post by Woodward and Berstein do not appear to have required the massive resources of a great organization; it is far from clear that these or other reporters employed by a more competitive press would not have broken the story just as soon. Indeed, it might have broken sooner if newspaper editors and their electronic counterparts felt more competitive pressure and less sense of "social responsibility." Owen, who formerly served as a Brookings Institution Fellow and chief economist for OTP, says "The 'countervailing power' theory of the role of the press must, it seems to me, be rejected. It requires a belief in the efficacy of conscious moral action by institutions with at least sometimes contrary incentives, and it depends unduly on the frail need of human nature. Neither the profits nor the prophets of the press are themselves 'elect'." He goes on: " We are far better off with a system in which it is assumed that everyone is following his own self-interest; behavior is then predictable and can be discounted appropriately." In writing about the effect of a monopoly press, Owen says "When an institution sets itself up as the moral and ethical protector of 'truth', and claims to stand

above the incentives affecting its own self-interest, more than a few citizens may be seriously misled." Going against the grain of today's new journalism, Owen suggests "The proper performance of the social and political role of the press ought not to be a matter of 'courage' but a matter of survival...Given human nature the process cannot safely depend on 'fearless' editors and it cannot depend on 'responsible' editors. It must depend on editors concerned for their competitive survival in the marketplace."

GOVERNMENT AND THE MEDIA

Although public broadcasters were given the impression in the November 6th PBS newsletter that plans to build a nationwide domestic satellite system to service public radio and television stations are moving ahead rapidly, MR is hearing there may be trouble on the horizon. Recently reported discontent with the efforts of the Satellite Working Group, a discontent which led the CPB board on Nov. 12 to demand "significantly more information" before it would commit more energy and money to the project, was overcome at a meeting in New York this past Thursday morning. CPB Board member Tom Moore gathered representatives of the Ford Foundation, National Public Radio, PBS and of the SWG including project director Myron Curzan of the Washington law firm of Arnold and Porter to receive what was described as "desperately needed additional information." One participant told MR "I think we've avoided what was fast becoming a head-on encounter." However, it is MR's understanding that even if these early disagreements are settled, big hurdles in the future will have to be cleared before the domestic satellite system will get the go-ahead. From talking to knowledgeable sources about the deliberations, here are some of the problems: 1) There is a chance the costs will be too high...estimates show the yearly satellite bill could be as high as 12 million dollars, twice what is currently being paid A.T.& T. for land lines; 2) The SWG says it is targeting Western Union as the probable carrier...how will the FCC handle this question when confronted with filings from RCA, A.T. & T. and others who charge that the system ought to be commonly owned because the American taxpayer is footing most of the bill; 3) the commercial networks, increasingly irritated by ratings successes of programs like "The Incredible Machine", are expected to cry foul (the networks find it hard to understand why the federal treasury should be used for funding a system that competes for some of their advertising dollars); and 4) the individual stations have not been consulted on whether they want a satellite system and one station manager tells MR "We might just not go along with it. They have yet to ask us if we want it."

Behind-the-scenes manuevering continues in the search for a new President of PBS. Station managers, very sensitive to constant rumors that an individual outside of the public broadcasting field will be chosen, were not pleased to hear the name of retiring CBS Government Affairs V.P. Dick Jencks being mentioned. Meanwhile, some managers are beginning to rally around New Jersey public system manager Dr. Lawrence Frymire for the post. As one station chief put it, "the decision will determine whether we are going to be a distribution system or a network -- that is the basic question."

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

Former President Richard Nixon, in his first interview since leaving office, told William Fine in the December Ladies' Home Journal:

"The media has abdicated its fact-gathering to non-believing young people, who seem to want to break down our values. I used to be able to make sense with the Paleys, the Sarnoffs and the Goldensons, and with that new fellow at CBS, even with the key commentators, but a lot of their research comes from a very cynical element."

Many of the arguments about cable & the poor could have been made about TV itself (esp if developed by corpns other than radio broadcasters). E.g. the lower qual of radio be shouldn't be allowed to finance the devel of expensive TV that only rich can afford.

This kind of arg would lead to no new media being allowed unless it offered old programming cheaper; even there, TV was fought by NATO.

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M E M O R A N D U M

To: Tom Whitehead

From: Audrey Ginsberg

Subject: Research on Medicine Shows in the U.S.

I've been able to gather a fair amount of data on medicine shows in the U.S., most of which I was able to retrieve at the Library of Congress. Several of these books discuss medicine shows very superficially but they do give one clues as to their popularity, the impact they had on audiences, the types of audiences they attracted, and the cities and towns in which they played. I came across one important biography of Thomas P. Kelley who was known as the "King of the Medicine Shows", and I will summarize the important aspects of this book for you later on. I will also summarize a couple of other books which I've read on this very interesting subject, accompanied by xeroxes of the relevant chapters.

It has been rather difficult to establish when exactly the medicine shows faded from the entertainment scene, if at all. Some historians at Harvard with whom I've discussed this in great detail seem to be of the opinion that they still exist and can be

sighted in the small Pennsylvania Dutch Country towns. Some books suggest they faded in the early 1930's, while others refer to the popularity of medicine shows in the 1950's. This is one question I haven't quite been able to resolve as yet.

You were also interested in knowing what types of entertainment followed the medicine shows. As far as this is concerned, it appears that one-reel films replaced medicine shows in the 30's, followed by more sophisticated movies and then radio and television. I've found 3 references on this, and several historians at Harvard have verified it as well. For example in "The Golden Age of Quackery" by Stewart Holbrook, there is one paragraph which states:

> "Whether as a troupe or singly, pitch doctors provided some sort of entertainment to attract and hold an audience but at carefully calculated intervals. The audience had to listen to the lecture as they were to do later when medicine shows moved into radio and then into television and the lecture became a commercial."

I will therefore have to assume this is accurate.

I am now going to summarize the biography of Thomas P. Kelley, Jr., and his 50 year career in the medicine game and how he was able to amass $2,000,000. Following the biography, I will cite references from 3 other books on the subject.

"The Fabulous Kelley - The True Story of the Medicine Show Era", Simon & Shuster of Canada Ltd.

Thomas P. Kelley, Jr., was known as the "King of the Medicine Shows". Born on April 14, 1968 in Leeds County, Ontario, he enjoyed almost 50 years in the medicine game. Doc. Kelley as he was known, sold medicines such as Bonyan, Shamrock Healing oil, East Indian Tiger Fat, Passion Flower Tablets, etc. He played in 37 American states and every province in Canada, Illinois and Michigan and Ohio were his favourite stomping grounds. Two weeks was the normal stay in most towns although in the 1920's when business was exceptionally brisk he'd stay for about 8 weeks. "The twanging of the banjos, songs of the blackfaced comedians and all the other fun items of the show" were free. Doc. Kelley was a pioneer in the entertainment field bringing many firsts to show business in the area of musical entertainment and slapstick comedy.

Every spring for 40 years advertisements of Doc. Kelley would appear in The Billboard, The Clipper and other theatrical publications telling his requirements for the coming season.

Doc. Kelley became involved in medicine shows through a travelling visitor who came to his town when he was 16 years old. Seeing how this occupation could be very worthwhile financially Doc. Kelley became very excited about the prospect of setting up his own medicine show.

Doc. Kelley dreamed up a name for his show and settled upon "Kelley's Shamrock Concert Co." which would travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

On the whole, medicine men were fairly well respected in the towns. They were not fly-by-nights as one would be led to believe. On the contrary, they would return to cities time and again. When Kelley was in town he'd draw thousands of people nightly from the surrounding districts. They would all come to see "the big free fun show". Leading merchants and sometimes the Mayor of a town himself would ask Doc. Kelley to extend his stay for another week. In nearly every town he played, he'd leave a large supply of remedies in leading drug stores and some would continue to order by mail.

Doc. Kelley would reflect "the medicine show was a business enterprise, an unusual way of getting the goods before the eyes of the public, and legitimately"as far as most of the medicine men he knew.

The medicine show carried 7-10 performers. The big free fun shows were often attended by as many as 6,000 - 7,000 people. The shows usually began at 8 p.m.

Behind the platform would be several dressing room tents and an office tent where people could receive free consultation and advice. Each presentation lasted around 30 minutes.

When lecturing to an audience on an open-air platform and lauding the merits of the tonics he sold, Bigfoot (Doc. Kelley's partner) would guzzle several drinks from one of the bottles to show

the good people how easy it was to take and to fortify himself to be a hundred. The bottle contained Whisky, but the audience had no way of knowing.

Doc. Kelley's sales pitch would be as follows:

"Good evening ladies and Gentlemen. And now if you will gather in a little closer where you can see and hear better, we are going to start up our grand free open-air entertainment. Tonight, as on every night, we have comedy acts, novelty acts and suprizes. You will see the magic Supper of Zodiac, the disappearing pony, the young lady on the high wire, and the smallest monkey in the world. There will also be two solid hours of side splitting comedy; you will laugh till you are blue in the face. Later you will have the opportunity to purchase my remedies that will give you long life, strong bodies, good health, and yes, that's it - gather in closer folks -- step up a little closer".

Fifteen-hundred to 1800 people would gather around. At the back of the crowd there would be a large semi-circle of waggons and buggies, many of them still occupied by their owners who would enjoy the luxury of sitting while watching the show. Some had driven for miles -- but they had decided it was worth it. The youngsters would stand at the foot of the platform and wait for the "funny men to come on stage". Doc. Kelley would be lecturing on the merits of his herbs,

the new oriental discovery and warning his listeners as to the importance of it's immediate use. He would be dressed in patent leather shoes, black trousers, swallow tail-coat and brocaded white vest with gold chains. He would top his height-of-fashion ensemble with a large black Stetson.

After the sales pitch, Doc. Kelley's three performers would hurry into the audience each with a carton of new oriental discovery while several hundred hands would be raised in the audience, all holding silver dollars. Doc. Kelley would shout "who's next?" "Ah, this intelligent man wishes to buy himself 20 years of health for only one dollar". Famous people like Mrs. Corbett Pickett who were impressed with Doc. Kelley would often ask him to do a special show for them.

The Shamrock Concert Company travelled to cities like Cincinnati, the southern boarder of Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia (outskirts of Atlanta), Savannah, South and North Carolina, small sections of Virginia, the Canadian provinces like Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, as well as the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

Doc. Kelley unlike a number of other medicine men rarely played local halls or opera houses with his medicine shows. The reason being that they seldom had a seating capacity of over 400.

During 1880-1920 people really went for Medicine shows in Ohio particularly. More money was to be made in a small Ohio village

than in fair sized towns in other states and when playing in towns like Akron, Youngstown, Springfield and Columbus, he'd be pulling in crowds of six to eight thousand.

Doc. Kelley hit upon numerous gimmicks as incentives for people to purchase his products. One such idea was a baby contest during which parents competed to have their latest offspring declared the most popular baby. Shamrock Tapeworm Remover was another product introduced. To demonstrate the effectiveness of this product, Doc. Kelley would place tapeworms in glass jars preserved in alcohol across the front stage. This resulted in about the biggest form of advertising he could hope to get, as they always aroused the interest and comments of the crowds at the show. He would also line up several men and women on the stage and these people would vouch for the effectiveness of Shamrock Tapeworm Remover by confirming that these tapeworms had infact been removed from their stomachs.

In the 1930's when asked why he didn't want to play the big towns like New York, Chicago, Detroit, he explained that everyone would soon own an automobile which would take the farmers and their wives to city lights and the world was changing. He felt there was a definite change that was going to take place in theatrical entertainment. He would say that one-reel moving pictures would be used as crowd chasers; the motion picture industry was soon to take over, and picture houses would soon be springing up in rural areas.

As far back as 1909 it was said that Doc. Kelley had seen the handwriting on the wall which foretold the impending doom of the medicine show era.

Doc. Kelley maintained that in the 1920's people had begun to lose their interest in medicine shows. All the inhabitants in the smaller towns began to regard medicine shows with minor interest, something to be endured while waiting for the semi-weekly change of the bill at the local cinema or the Saturday night trip to distant city lights. Even the kids had changed. In the old days the'd enquire when the funny men were coming to town. Now they were running around with a stick or a toy pistol. Every farmer's daughter wanted to leave the "milkstool" to go to Hollywood and become another Theda Bara. Doc. Kelley maintained there was only one way to do it and that would be to penetrate the sideroads and play among the "rubes".

In 1931 he died and according to this book so had the entertainment that brought joy to millions -- a form of entertainment that was popular for more than 100 years.

Another type of medicine show is cited in "Toadstool Millionnaires" by James Harvey Young. I am enclosing a copy of the chapter dealing with medicine shows.

This book discusses the Indian medicine shows and the most famous one of all, the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Show Company which vended a remedy called Kickapoo Indian Sagwa made of aloes and stale beer. Healy and Bigelow became involved in this venture. They hired Indians by the hundreds and these shows resembled small circuses in size. It is my understanding that Indians were hired specifically to give the show an air of authenticity, particularly when they were peddling

exotic herbs and spices.

In "The Medical Messiahs," by James Harvey Young, we learn about Dudley Le Blanc's Medicine Troupe in the 1950's which toured the South doing one night stands in 18 cities. Heavy advertising heralded the show's approach and his famous product "Hadocol" was to be promoted. Here again, I'm enclosing a copy of Chapter 15 of this book .

As you will note there are several footnotes which refer to further reading materials on this subject. If the above is insufficient, I will try to track down these other books. However, I think most of them are obtainable at the Library of Congress only. The Harvard and M.I.T. libraries as well as the Boston Public Library have very little reading material on this subject.

I do hope you will find the above useful for the book.

James Harvey Young Toadstool Millionnaires

12

MEDICINE SHOW

"And they like to pay a little for a tonic and an evening's entertainment rather than pay a lot to a doctor who gives you no fun at all."—VICTOR HOLMES, *Salt of the Earth*[1]

NOTHING in God's world is the matter with most of you worms, worms, worms."[2]

Such a startling pronouncement, set in bold-faced type, might well give pause to any newspaper reader and urge the eye down into the smaller print in search of whys and wherefo How much more disturbing were the same words when he rather than seen, delivered with pontifical assurance by the re nant voice of a commanding figure in a tall hat and cutaway c who gained in majesty through the flickering illumination gasoline flares.

Patent medicine promoters, during the same years that t pioneered in print the many psychological lures that might their wares, often went out to meet their customers face to f Because the effort of orating an appeal was more profitably pended on a group than on an individual, some enticement attract a crowd was necessary. Exotic costume might help, most itinerant vendors did not rest content with dressing them selves up. They added entertainment. They put on a show.

Colonial America had her mountebanks selling their ware just as did Europe of the same day. They came to towns a villages especially at such times as fairs, when the native popul tion was swollen by outsiders. They set up their platforms, p formed their shows, delivered their harangues, sold their re edies, and went their ways. The tone of their entertainme sometimes offended ministers, and the quality of their medicin sometimes disturbed physicians. If the two groups could agr

1 Holmes [Kenneth H. Kitch], *Salt of the Earth* (N.Y., 1941), 214.
2 Robert B. Nixon, Jr., *Corner Druggist* (N.Y., 1941), 66.

as in Connecticut on the eve of the Revolution, restrictive legisla- tion might be enacted. Medical declamations by mountebanks, the colonial assembly decided in 1773, as well as their "plays, tricks, juggling or unprofitable feats of uncommon dexterity and agility of body," had harmful social results. All this fostered "the corruption of manners, promoting of idleness, and the detriment of good order and religion," and also ensnared people into buying "unwholesome and oftentimes dangerous drugs." So mountebanks were outlawed.[3]

But laws did not stop them. During the first half of the 19th century there were many men like William Avery Rockefeller who brought both entertainment and nostrums to backwoods towns. Rockefeller circulated through the Midwest and, according to legend, used his talents as marksman, ventriloquist, and hypnotist to attract the crowds to whom he sold his packaged herbs. (When William's son, John D., died in 1937, his physician reported that the aged millionaire had taken "several patented articles religiously, to aid his health.")[4]

The heyday of the medicine show came during the last two decades of the 19th century. Solo performers like Rockefeller continued to operate. But there was a tremendous expansion in the size and variety of the business. Nevada Ned, a big-time showman, summed up the colorful scene: "Here full evenings of drama, vaudeville, musical comedy, Wild West shows, minstrels, magic, burlesque, dog and pony circuses, not to mention Punch and Judy, pantomime, movies, menageries, bands, parades and eating contests, have been thrown in with Ho-Ang-Nan, the great Chinese herb remedy, and med shows have played in opera houses, halls, storerooms, ball parks, show boats and tents, large and small, as well as doorways, street corners and fairs."[5]

So large and complex did the cast of characters become that ste lines developed, from the prestigious performers in large ows vending innocuous remedies like liniments down to the

Richardson Wright, *Hawkers & Walkers of Early America* (Phila., 1927), 7-38, 199-200 [the Conn. law]; Shafer, *The American Medical Profession, 1783 to 1850*, 206; John Keevil, "Coffeehouse Cures," *Jnl. Hist. of Med. and Allied Sciences*, 9 (1954), 195; *The Harangues, or Speeches, Of Several Celebrated Quack-Doctors in Town and Country* (London, 1762).
Allan Nevins, *John D. Rockefeller* (N.Y., 1940), I, 16-18, 37-38; *Standard Remedies*, 23 (June 1937), 13.
N. T. Oliver (as told to Wesley Stout), "Med Show," *Sat. Eve. Post*, 202 (Sept. 14, 1929), 12.

"jamb workers," the sheer frauds, like the Duke and Dauphin, encountered by Huckleberry Finn.[6]

The grandest spectacle of all was the Indian show born of the joint imaginations of a Connecticut Yankee and a Texan. The New Haven Irishman, John E. Healy, had been a Civil War drummer boy who took a liniment down to Savannah in Reconstruction days. Temporarily side-tracked with a troupe of non-therapeutic Irish minstrels, Healy had gotten back to medication in 187- with a liver pad. This was his first venture with "Texas Charley" Bigelow, a farm boy who had served a med show apprenticeship with Doctor Yellowstone. The experience had given him long hair and beard and useful if suspect Indian medical lore. The liver pad did well, especially among the newly liberated Negroes of the South, who attributed to it conjuring powers. Healy and Bigelow, however, dreamed of even bigger things. In 188- along with "Nevada Ned" Oliver, they formed the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Company to vend a remedy called Kickapoo Indian Sagwa. The original Sagwa, according to a legend in the business, was made of aloes and stale beer. Whatever it may have been, the formula through time did not stray far from herbs and alcohol. It was not the constituents but the promotion that brought this tonic fame. Healy and Bigelow began hiring Indians by the hundreds—none of them Kickapoo—to put on a show.[7]

Healy and Bigelow could traffic not only on the long-established connection between the red man's vigor and the white man's nostrum. They could also count upon the Easterner's awe curiosity about a bronze-skinned people he no longer knew at firsthand but was much aware of through reports of constant Indian fighting in the West.

The standard Kickapoo show traveled with half a dozen Indians and as many white performers. The show opened with the Indians sitting stoically in a half-circle, in front of a backdrop painted to reveal an Indian scene, the more realistic because of torchlight illumination. Nevada Ned, or some other "scout" wearing long hair and buckskins, introduced the Indians one by one

[6] Violet McNeal, *Four White Horses and a Brass Band* (Garden City, N.Y., 1947), 43-44; N. T. Oliver (as told to Wesley Stout), "Alagazam, The Story of Pitchmen, High and Low," *Sat. Eve. Post*, 202 (Oct. 19, 1929), 76.

[7] Information on the Healy-Bigelow shows is from the Oliver articles; Harlow R. Hoyt, *Town Hall Tonight* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955), 247; McNeal, 5- an early 20th century bottle of Sagwa in author's possession.

-fly describing their past heroism. Five of the redskins knowledged their introduction with a mere grunt, but the th delivered an impassioned oration in his native tongue. As terpreted by the scout, the tale described the dramatic origin of remedy which had saved countless Indian lives and which was ut to be offered, after great sacrifice, to the white members the audience. When the sales pitch was finished, half the ian and white members of the company went out among the wd to sell, while the remaining whites played musical instruents and the Indians beat their tom-toms and broke into wild whoops. In such a noisy atmosphere, medicine and money anged hands.

Some seventy-five such Kickapoo shows might be touring the ntry at a time during the eighties. Now and then Healy and elow promoted an even more majestic spectacle, a stationary w with up to a hundred performers. Nevada Ned presided r one such venture that played a whole season in New Jersey. wagon train attacked by Indians was saved by cowboys who turn were threatened by a prairie fire. The final outcome was sale of up to $4,000 worth of Kickapoo Indian Sagwa every ek. Among the show's spectators was numbered Buffalo Bill self, but there is no record as to whether or not he bought a tle.

The peer of Healy and Bigelow ventures, in commerce if not showmanship, were the troupes traveling to boost the sale of lin's Wizard Oil. John Austen Hamlin, the founding father, been a magician pure and simple, according to legend, until discovered that the take was greater when he used his prestitation to promote a liniment. Magic there was for sure in the me Wizard Oil, which he affixed to the remedy he vended. ving from Cincinnati to Chicago during the Civil War, mlin built up his product to one of the best-known liniments in erica. In doing so, he rather forsook magic for music.[8]

Hamlin's emissaries sang for their sales. Touring the highys and byways of the country were numerous troupes, each

[8] Information on the Hamlin enterprise is from William P. Burt, "Back Stage th a Medicine Show Fifty Years Ago," *Colorado Mag.*, 19 (1942), 127-28; ver, "Med Show," 174; McNeal, 54-55; *Chicago Tribune*, May 21, 1908; lin W. Leonard, ed., *The Book of Chicagoans* (Chicago, 1905), 258; Chicago directories, 1864-1905, in the Chicago Hist. Soc.; *Missouri Hist. Rev.*, 45 951), 375; *Hamlin's Wizard Oil Song Book* in author's possession. That the ncern did not entirely forsake magic is evident from Hoyt, 248.

made up of a lecturer, a driver, and a male quartet. The group traveled in a special wagon, pulled by a four- or six-horse team, into which was built a parlor organ. The wagon, in the torchlit evening, became a stage, from which the quartet sang and played. A stylish sight they were, clad in silk top hats, frock coats, plaid striped trousers, and patent leather shoes—with spats. At times the assembled audience sang with them. One of Hamlin's stunts was the lavish distribution of pamphlets in which the words of such songs as "I'se Gettin' Up a Watermelon Party" and "Is Life Worth Living?" were interspersed with promises as to how Wizard Oil could grapple with asthma and neuralgia. These song books were carried into thousands of homes. During the week or more that a troupe stayed in a town, the members were busy during the day as well as at night. While the lecturer sought to place supplies of Hamlin's liniment with local druggists, the quartet displayed their talents for church and charity groups.

Hamlin, a man of substance in Chicago, fittingly spent some of his Magic Oil income, soon after the great fire, to build the opera house that bore his name.

There were other major entrepreneurs like Hamlin and the Healy-Bigelow team. There were also innumerable small timers, free-lancers of all shades of repute. One of the better sort was Dr. C. M. Townsend with whom the young James Whitcomb Riley traveled for a season. The doctor was a kind and generous man with a gift for coining moral aphorisms. During the winter he prepared and packaged his Magic Oil, his King of Coughs, and his Cholera Balm, in Lima, Ohio, and in the spring set out with a covered wagon containing side seats for the members of his troupe. Nearing a town, they would arouse the population with blasts from a horn and then distribute broadsides. At the edge of town they formed a band and paraded through the main streets.[9]

Dr. Townsend gave two "lectures" a day, one in the afternoon, the main speech at night. The versatile Riley did so many things that he was presented as the "Hoosier Wizard." He beat the bass drum, played the violin, sang ballads, gave poetry readings, and used his sketching talent to draw cartoons on blackboards affixed to the wagon while his employer extolled the

[9] Dickey, *The Youth of James Whitcomb Riley*, 193-212.

merits of his remedies. "Last night at Winchester," the poet wrote, "I made a decided sensation by making a rebus of the well-known lines from Shakespeare—

> 'Why let pain your pleasures spoil,
> For want of Townsend's Magic Oil?' "

Most small-scale medicine shows were neither so moral nor so literary. Bad liquor flowed like water. One lecturer took swigs of the alcohol in which were preserved the repulsive tapeworms. Drug addiction was not infrequent. Performers were people with skill too limited to make the big time, or with temperaments, habits, or pasts which doomed them to dreary, ill-paid, nomadic lives. Most of the "doctors," for that matter, died broke. Excessive habits, poor management, a run of bad luck, drained off the proceeds. Not that each individual sale did not yield a handsome dividend. Few of the small operators were as conservative as the O. Henry pitchman who "respected his profession, and . . . was satisfied with 300 per cent. profit." The sky was the limit. The operators filled salve boxes with axle grease. They mixed powdered herbs in hotel bathtubs. They colored and flavored and bottled water. "Water," explained the brooding "doctor" in a Jim Tully story, "is the great healer—three-fourths of the earth's surface is water."[10]

Whatever medicine was sold, and whatever attractions were used to lure the citizenry, the sales pitch was always sandwiched in between entertainment. It would not do to begin selling at once, for the audience would feel themselves short-changed. A proper mood needed creating. This mood was not one thing. It might be awe at expert marksmanship. It might be delight at black-face comedy. It might be the slightly naughty shock of seeing a magician pull lingerie from grandpa's pocket.[11] The mood was something that beguiled a crowd, drove from their minds extraneous concerns, and focused attention upon a novel and entrancing spectacle. Thus they were made receptive. Even

[10] McNeal, *passim*; Malcolm Webber, *Medicine Show* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1941), 11, 47-48, 82-83; O. Henry, "Jeff Peters As a Personal Magnet," in *The Gentle Grafter* (N.Y., 1908), 22; Charles L. Pancoast, *Trail Blazers of Advertising* (N.Y., 1926), 178; Jim Tully, "The Giver of Life," *Amer. Mercury*, 14 (June 1928), 154-60.

[11] Claude Gamble, "The Medicine Show," manuscript sketch written for the *Dallas Star*, in possession of Robert Gamble, Sea Cliff, N.Y.; Oliver, "Medicine Show," 173; Holmes, 225.

with such a build-up, no medicine man was cocky enough t count on holding his audience during the sales pitch without th promise of more free entertainment to come. The after-piece wa a fixed part of every show.

When the pitchman took over, he did not begin by mentio ing medicine. Showmen there were, indeed, like Doctor Sil Dollar, who haughtily denied they were what they really were When a village editor referred to Dollar's Famous Carnival Health as a "medicine show," the doctor disdainfully repli "You sully us. We deal in no back lots and gutter water." M pursuers of the profession did not go to this extreme. But the might deny that they were *selling* medicine—they were giving away and using the small mandatory contribution to finance missionary journey. Or they might deny that they were selling *medicine*—rather, it was healthful minerals extracted fr Nature's purest water. If it was medicine and if they were sellin it, the price was "introductory" and seldom half as high as th figure printed on the label.[12]

Any talk of medicine and money was gradually and ginger approached. Skilled haranguer that he was, the pitchman had big job to do first. He had to scare the living daylights out of th people in his audience. However hale and hearty they might fee he must make them sick and frightened enough to buy hi sovereign remedy. The variety of fright was infinite. The fals symptom was a popular approach. For example:

"Do you ever feel like it is almost impossible to get up in th morning? You eat well and sleep well, but you hate to get up. You hate work. Do you ever feel that way? . . . Well, folks, you may not know it, but that's the first sign of gallopin' consumption!"

Or again: "You laughing, happy audience; you mother, you father, you young man, woman and child, every one of you—within you are the seeds of death! Is it cancer? Is it consumption? Is it perhaps some unknown malady?"[14]

Often was cited the horrible example: "Kidney trouble sneaks up on you like a snake in the grass. Like a thief in the night. It spares neither rich nor poor. The Archbishop of Canterbury was

[12] *Ibid.*, 216-22; Thomas J. LeBlanc, "The Medicine Show," *Amer. Mercury*, 5 (June 1925), 234; W. Lee Provol, *The Pack Peddler* (Phila., 1937), 87-88. McNeal, 167-79.

[13] LeBlanc, 235.

[14] David Edstrom, "Medicine Man of the '80's," *Reader's Digest*, 32 (Jun 1938), 77.

descending the steps of that great English cathedral when he fell down like an ox smitten in the shambles, stone dead! They held an autopsy; there was nothing wrong with his stomach, heart, or lungs. But gentlemen, when they turned him over and looked at his kidneys . . . gentlemen, they looked just like a rotten tomato."[15]

In addition to the power of his personal magnetism, the traveling "doctor" had another advantage over his rival who advertised in the press. The medicine showman could contribute to the atmosphere of panic by means of horrendous exhibits. The massive hookworm—bought by the bucketful from local slaughterhouses—was indeed a shocker. Curled up in alcohol in large glass jars, the sobering creatures mutely performed for months. There were showmen specializing in making the hookworm the root of all evil, who performed clandestine feats of legerdemain that let them later exhibit worms in public and tell the names of local dignitaries who had allegedly harbored them.[16]

A pitchman who battled against catarrh planted one of the company in his audiences to step up when an appeal was made to test the potency of the salve on sale. "My friend, have you catarrh?" the doctor would inquire. "Yes, sir," the shill replied in a snuffly voice. "Please put a small application of this salve in each nostril," the doctor directed. The shill did as he was bade. Finally the pitchman handed the sufferer a spotless handkerchief. "Now blow your nose hard," he said. The noise could be heard hundreds of feet away. What the audience did not know as they were shown the revolting result was that the doctor's anonymous assistant had earlier stuffed a nostril with stiff custard.[17]

This sort of "proof" showmen often resorted to. It was a common stunt to flatter an audience by remarking on their intelligent faces. Most crowds, the showman would say, looked much less bright. The present company could not be persuaded by mere words, he was well aware, so he would present an irrefutable demonstration. This might require calling the huskiest man from the crowd to take the tuberculosis test, which consisted of blowing through a straw into a sensitive diagnostic fluid (lime-water). Of course, the fluid turned milky, and of course the cloudiness denoted raging consumption. The healing potency of the doctor's remedy could also be scientifically proved. A few

[15] McNeal, 66. [16] *Ibid.*, 69-70; LeBlanc, 234. [17] McNeal, 118-19.

drops (of vinegar) dispelled the cloud and restored the water to its pristine clarity.[18]

Other demonstrations relating to body chemistry were equally persuasive, and the site of their internal occurrence might be graphically portrayed by means of anatomical models and charts which showmen carried. It was effective, when orating about the dire afflictions which might assail the lungs, the liver, and the bowels, to point to pictures of these organs printed in gaudy reds and purples. Diamond Dick displayed a series of such charts—the muscles, the veins and arteries, the skeleton, the inward organs, even the nerves shining in silver within a dark human frame. Another pitchman used an "Alas, poor Yorick" routine. He came forth holding in one hand an inhalator and in the other a skull. Nervous laughter swept his audience. "This isn't a joke, friends," the showman said. "It is far from a joke. This is the skull of a man who died from catarrh. He wouldn't have died if he'd had one of these inhalators. Put it in your nose and it goes where you can't get with anything else. . . . Spinal meningitis germs enter the nasal passages. Science says that over fifty disease germs, many of them deadly, enter the nose and mouth. Here's something that won't make them feel so good, but will make you feel a lot better."[19]

Quick cures were sometimes wrought before the very eyes of an audience. Liniment could relieve deafness (if due partially to impacted wax) when the showman, in addition to inserting the potent fluid, performed some sleight-of-hand with an earspoon. Snake oil could vanquish arthritis of the elbow if, during its vigorous application, the victim's arm was numbed by pressing tightly against the back of a chair. Stunts of this sort were not devoid of risk. On one occasion a showman had made a man's rheumatism temporarily disappear by vigorous rubbing. But the pain returned, and the dissatisfied customer came back with a gun. The frightened doctor fled the town on foot. Out in the country, he heard dogs baying in the distance. Fearful of a posse, the showman climbed a tree. Soon two hounds ran by chasing a rabbit. Safe but completely unstrung, the pitchman gave up his profession.[20]

[18] *Ibid.*, 159-60; LeBlanc, 233-34.
[19] *Ibid.*; Gemble; Theodore Pratt, "Good Bye to the Medicine Show," *Medicine Economics*, 20 (Oct. 1942), 50, 124.
[20] LeBlanc, 233; article on El Brendel, *Atlanta Jnl.*, Apr. 17, 1934; Burt, 132-33.

From time to time, of course, there were skeptics who had to be dealt with. Most pitchmen were quick thinkers endowed with a brazen manner, and they had a store of stock remarks to deal with various untoward situations. It was deemed wise to heap a scornful scolding on the first member of the audience who sought to wander off after the spiel began. The rest of the crowd, fearful of being made so embarrassingly conspicuous, generally stood rooted to their spots. Sarcasm was also employed to silence the smart aleck who voiced his doubt. Many pitchmen sought to ward off hostility from one quarter by praising the local disciples of Aesculapius and suggesting that the nostrum for sale had the blessing of reputable medicine. One street-corner sharper, indeed, posed as a virtual agent for the American Medical Association. But there had to be a certain ambivalence regarding orthodox medicine, for with showmen as with newspaper-advertisers, their remedies had to succeed where regular doctors failed. Surgeons especially were belabored. The operating doctor was a lower form of creature than a butcher, quick to engage in such a bastardly adventure as to "cut open your umbilicus and take out your tweedium."[21]

Fantastic tales to explain a remedy's healing potency often formed part of a showman's speech, varied to fit the flavor of the show. Many were the medical secrets that had been lured from the Indians by devious stratagems. God's hand was frequently at work, for there were medicine shows that traveled in the name of religion. Pitchmen in somber Quaker garb vended remedies with much thee-ing and thou-ing. The Shakers also were in the field, similarly clad—and this sect really did exercise some supervision over the quality of the herbal mixtures vended. The Oriental theme was also popular. One "professor" spent his first evening in a new town saying not a word. Swathed in robes, he sat silent as a statue, staring straight ahead, while two aides, one on either side, pounded away at kettledrums. Phosphorescent banners bore his name and a weird mixture of unintelligible letters and symbols. The scene was illumined by green fire.[22]

[21] Jerome Renitz, "Med Shows on the Main Stem," *New Republic*, 63 (1930), 66-68; McNeal, 155-57, 161; Oliver, "Alagazam," 76; Tully, 157.
[22] Holmes, 219-21; Burt, 133-34; Hoyt, 246-47; McNeal, 55-56; Oliver, "Med Show," 173-74; Oliver, "Alagazam," 79; George Jean Nathan, "The Medicine Man," *Harper's Wkly.*, 55 (Sep. 9, 1911), 24.

The wonders of the Oriental healing art were relied upon by one of the noted women who plied the medicine trade in the early 20th century. Violet McNeal, in her autobiography, *Four White Horses and a Brass Band*, describes her debut as Princess Lotus Blossom. Wearing a mandarin coat and Chinese skullcap, she told her street-corner crowd the sad "story of peril, of overwhelming danger, of a dread and mysterious ailment which threatened to wipe from the face of the earth the great people of the Chinese nation." This dire disaster was loss of male vitality. "To the horror of all who were aware of this impending tragedy, it seemed inevitable that this mighty race might perish. Its life force was gone. Its manhood no longer possessed the strength for perpetuation of the strain which had existed throughout history."[23]

The Emperor, faced with the crisis, proclaimed that he would give a princely fortune to anyone who found a means of restoring Chinese vitality. Many famous physicians and scientists tried and failed. One astute sage, He Tuck Chaw by name, while exploring a volcanic region encountered a variety of turtle, the Kup Ki See, in which the golden-striped male was outnumbered by the female 1,000 to 1. What was the secret of this incredible vitality? He Tuck Chaw pushed his researches with vigor and hope. At last he discovered that the male turtle differed from the female in possessing a small pouch, the Quali Quah pouch, at the base of the brain. "He removed the pouches. . . , dried and powdered them, and gave tiny portions to the Chinese people. The reaction was both swift and effective." The nation was saved.

Princess Lotus Blossom, of course, had come into possession of the secret. "There is, gentlemen," she told her listeners, "a sufficient quantity of this same substance in these Vital Sparks I am going to offer tonight to restore you to health, virility, and happiness."

The Vital Sparks had really been no closer to a turtle than had the Princess to China. She and her husband had made them by pouring buckshot candy into a hotel bureau drawer, dampening it, and rolling it around in powdered aloes. This was what made "old men young and young men stronger."

After the pitchman had terrified his hearers and given the romantic credentials of his remedy, the moment came for selling.

[23] McNeal, 73-74, 91-94.

Sales went best amid noise, turbulence, and confusion. Nevada Ned's Indians whooped and his musicians played. Most showmen sought for a similar atmosphere. The beating of drums and blaring of horns produced a frenzied accompaniment for the pitchman's continued harangue, rendered in a bull-like roar. Members of the troupe ran madly here and there among the audience, sometimes turning cartwheels to add to the excitement. Getting one bottle of medicine from the doctor, each minion would hurry out and sell it, shouting "S-o-o-o-l-d!" or "Another bottle gone!" or "More medicine, Doctor!" as he pocketed the money and ran back to get another bottle. A sort of mob hypnotism swept spectators into the buying mood. Sometimes they bought and later went away, leaving the medicine behind.[24]

Restrictive legislation—federal, state, and local—was to put serious restraints on the free-wheeling medicine showmen in the 20th century. As rural areas became less culturally isolated, the shows lost some of their appeal. Moving pictures and, in time, the radio offered competitive amusements that took some of the fresh zest away. Though the medium continued, it did not possess the glamor and the daring of late 19th century ventures sponsored by Healy and Bigelow and their imaginative rivals.[25]

Seldom did an outsider get on the inside of the medicine show. On those rare cases when he did, he may well have been as astounded as was the fictional pedagogue in a novel of Harry Leon Wilson. Fleeing the routine of his campus and the dreariness of his home, Professor Copplestone winds up as an "Indian" in a flea-bitten show vending Aga-Jac Bitters among the farming folk of Iowa. At the first night's performance the yokels are carried away by the professor's medley of Greek iambics which passes for an aboriginal tongue. But they are not more impressed by Copplestone's contribution than is he by theirs. At the end of the evening, the professor's partner, a rogue named Sooner Jackson, counts out the money.[26]

"Forty-two iron men," he cries, "only thirty-two of which are profit, however, because those bottles cost money. Therefore, old bean. . . , you are sixteen plunks . . . to the mustard. Not bad for a start, eh?"

[24] Oliver, "Med Show," 173; Webber, 28; Pratt, 122; Edstrom, 78.
[25] Oliver, "Med Show," 12; Oliver, "Alagazam," 76; McNeal, 105-106; *Missouri Hist. Rev.*, 45 (1951), 375.
[26] Wilson, *Professor How Could You!* (N.Y., 1924), 126-33.

"I, for one, consider it excellent," the amazed professor replies, and he muses to himself: "Indeed, reckoning time and energy invested, it was so far in excess of my ordinary stipend that I felt my previous years had been frittered away."

PART FOUR

LEGISLATION

The Medical Messiahs by James Harvey Young.

15

MEDICINE SHOW IMPRESARIO

"What's Hadacol? Well, basically, it's a patent medicine—a little honey, a little of this and that, and a stiff shot of alcohol hyped up with vitamin B. Actually it's a great deal more. It's a craze. It's a culture. It's a political movement."

—NEWSWEEK, 1951[1]

ONE of the Federal Trade Commission's "customers" during the summer of 1950 was a Louisiana state senator named Dudley J. LeBlanc. Pausing briefly to sign a stipulation which promised to tone down his advertising claims, LeBlanc quickly turned his amazing energies to promoting the gaudiest comet to flash across the nostrum sky in the 20th century. Hadacol was, as Morris Fishbein said, the "apotheosis of nostrums."[2]

LeBlanc, during the heyday of his fame, was fond of telling inquiring reporters how it had all begun. In 1943, he said, he got a bad pain in his right big toe. The pain spread to his knees, his arms, his neck. Three different doctors gave him three different diagnoses—gout, arthritis, beriberi. Each treated him without success. While in a New Orleans hospital, he overheard his wife say: "He really is sick. I never saw Dudley so bad. I just don't know if I'll ever see him alive again."[3]

[1] 37 (Apr. 16, 1951), 32.

[2] In the Matter Of The LeBlanc Corporation, a corporation, and Dudley J. LeBlanc, an individual, Stipulation 8034, Aug. 17, 1950, FTC; Fishbein, "Hadacol—Apotheosis of Nostrums," *Postgraduate Medicine*, 9 (Feb. 1951), 175-77.

[3] The story exists in a number of versions containing some contradictions in details. This account is a composite taken from Norma Lee Browning's *Chicago Tribune* series, Feb. 18, 19, 20, 1951; *Newsweek*, 37 (Apr. 16, 1951), 32-33; Maynard Stitt, "Cousin Dud's Hadacol," *Amer. Mercury*, 73 (Sep. 1951), 7-15.

LeBlanc sought to escape from the hospital. As he hobbled out he met an old friend, another doctor, who told him he looked like "walking death." Hearing LeBlanc's symptoms, the doctor offered to cure them. So LeBlanc went with him to his office for an injection. Like magic the medication began to cure his condition. Each shot brought further improvement. LeBlanc was naturally curious. So he asked: "Doc, whazzat stuff you got in dat l'il ole bottle?"

"Dude, you crazy?" the doctor answered. "You think I give away my secrets to a man in the patent medicine business?"

Several days later the doctor was busy and told his nurse to give LeBlanc his shot.

"She wasn't so smart as him," LeBlanc later reminisced. "Nor so careful either. She left the bottle on the table. When she finished I gave her that old Southern Chivalry, you know, 'after you, Gertrude.' As soon as she turned her back I shoved the bottle in my pocket."

Taking the bottle to his hotel, LeBlanc read the label, then got some books to find out what the label meant. His injections, he found, were mostly B vitamins. "Then I figured to myself," LeBlanc said, "this is it."

It—as he shortly worked things out—proved to be an elixir of 12 per cent alcohol, plus some of the B complex vitamins, iron, calcium, and phosphorus, dilute hydrochloric acid, and honey. LeBlanc mixed the first batches in big barrels behind his Abbeville, Louisiana, barn, nearby farmers' daughters stirring it with boat oars. Everybody sampled it, and the ailing felt improved. LeBlanc put his product on the market. It took hold fast.[4]

"They came in to buy Hadacol," recalled a Lafayette pharmacist, "when they didn't have money to buy food. They had holes in their shoes and they paid $3.50 for a bottle of Hadacol."[5]

"From Down on the Delta"—so ran a later advertisement—"Came the Thrilling News! First to try HADACOL . . . first to see with their own eyes how this unknown new health formula marches into the battle against the pain and suffering of disease

[4] Hadacol bottle label; *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 18, 1951.

[5] Clayton Kirkpatrick in *ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1951.

. . . were the plain-living hard-to-convince families of Louisiana's romantic delta land, direct descendants of the famed Acadians who settled there 200 years ago. The wonderful news of HADACOL traveled fast. Along the fantastically twisted shores of the lonely bayous . . . across the sweltering sugar plantations into the tangled backwoods . . . in the picturesque settlements of Labadieville, Bayou Goula, Lafourche and Grand Conteau the French-speaking natives passed the word until the whole delta country knew about HADACOL."[6]

LeBlanc himself was a Cajun who traced his ancestry back nine generations to Acadia and France. Indeed, he was a professional Acadian, once penning a booklet about the great 18th-century migration from Nova Scotia to Louisiana, once escorting a group of Cajun girls dressed like Evangeline back to Grand Pré, stopping off at the White House to say hello to President Hoover. Born in 1895, the son of a blacksmith, LeBlanc spoke only the Cajun patois until he was almost ten. Poor but ambitious, he paid for some schooling by organizing a pants-pressing service. He served a while in World War I, then went on the road as salesman for shoes, tobacco, patent medicines. LeBlanc also launched a burial insurance company. And, playing up his Cajun heritage, he entered politics.[7]

In 1926 LeBlanc beat a Huey Long–backed candidate for the post of public service commissioner for southern Louisiana, and soon he was representing two Cajun parishes in the state senate. In 1932 LeBlanc made his first race for governor, opposing a candidate hand-picked by the Kingfish from his Senate seat in Washington. (Huey, incidentally, had once served part of his apprenticeship as traveling salesman for Wine of Cardui.) The race was bitter. LeBlanc tried to outdo Long's social welfare promises, offering a $30-a-month pension to all Louisiana citizens over 60. And charges of disloyalty to

[6] *New Orleans Item*, Oct. 14, 1948.

[7] LeBlanc, *The True Story of the Acadians* (n.p., 1932); on p. 90 is a photograph of the Louisiana party and President and Mrs. Hoover. Biographical data in souvenir program for 1951 Hadacol Caravan Show; *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 18, 19, 20, 1951; Stitt, "Cousin Dud's Hadacol," 7-15; David Nevin, "The Brass-Band Pitchman and His Million-Dollar Elixir," *True*, Mar. 1962, 16-25, 114.

the white race flew thick and fast. Huey termed Dudley's Thibodeaux Benevolent Association "a nigger burial lodge and shroud and coffin club," accusing its promoter of putting dead Negroes in expensive coffins and later transferring them to pine boxes for burial. Long also circulated pictures of LeBlanc and his Negro associates in the burial association. LeBlanc responded with pictures of Long distributing tax-bought textbooks to Negro children. At the end of this mudslinging campaign, Long's candidate beat LeBlanc handily in the primary.[8]

Selling out his burial association, LeBlanc began to manufacture patent medicines: Dixie Dew Cough Syrup and Happy Day Headache Powders. Three factors brought this venture to an end. First, competition was keen and profits not suitably rewarding. Second, in 1941, the Food and Drug Administration seized some of the Powders. The mixture of aspirin, acetanilid, caffeine, milk sugar, and the laxative phenolphthalein, the libel said, was dangerous to health when used according to directions and certainly not efficacious for the long list of ailments listed in the labeling. No claimant appearing in court, the Powders were condemned and destroyed. And third, LeBlanc built a better mousetrap. As a result of his big-toe crisis, he formulated Hadacol. The name was a contraction of Happy Day Company plus the "L" for LeBlanc's own initial.[9]

The senator boosted sales for his own product throughout the Cajun country by reading testimonials in French over a radio station. Shortly he expanded to printing testimonials in both French and English newspaper advertising. And what testimonials they were! "I no longer suffer from asthma," wrote a man from Iowa, Louisiana. "Crippling rheumatism for 10 years long . . . now I walk again," wrote a woman from St. Martinsville. "Was suffering terribly from disease of the blood . . . now back to work," wrote a man from New Orleans. "I do not have heart trouble any more," wrote a woman from Port Arthur, Texas. "This is to certify," wrote a man from Arnauds-

[8] Allan P. Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana: State Politics, 1920-1952* (Baltimore, 1956), 51, 76-78; Huey Long as salesman, *Standard Remedies*, 21 (July 1935), 14.

[9] *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 18, 1951; *Newsweek*, 37 (Apr. 16, 1951), 33; DDNJ 434 (the seizure took place Mar. 21, 1941).

ville, "that I . . . was suffering from ulcers of the stomach. . . . One doctor told me that I was suffering from cancer. . . . I decided to be operated on and my wife persuaded me to take HADACOL. . . . I can now eat almost everything . . . even pork. In fact, I feel perfectly well. I work hard in the field with no ill effect." In 1948 LeBlanc gathered up his glowing crop of testimonials and reprinted them in a pamphlet called *Good Health Life's Greatest Blessing*—replete with pictures of the testimonial givers. In sections on anemia, arthritis, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, heart trouble, high and low blood pressure, gallstones, paralytic stroke, tuberculosis, and ulcers, LeBlanc cited his grateful customers who praised Hadacol for curing them of these serious ailments.[10]

The Hadacol bubble began to expand enormously, growing out from the romantic delta land to cover the broader South. Lafayette became a boom town, as LeBlanc tore down houses and a school to enlarge his plant. Experts at promotion were hired from major proprietary concerns in the East. And as sales grew fast, LeBlanc's advertising campaign grew faster. Toward the end of 1949, he found he owed a tremendous tax bill which he did not have the ready cash to pay. So LeBlanc told his advertising manager to wipe out the bill by plunging the whole sum in new advertising. During the last two months of the year over $300,000 carried the Hadacol message far and wide.[11]

In entering the Atlanta market, for example, LeBlanc blanketed the area with newspaper ads and radio spots before he shipped any of his tonic to the city. He ran a radio contest, which required the listener to identify "Dixie," and winners were sent coupons good for a bottle of Hadacol. Going from drugstore to drugstore, recipients found no Hadacol in stock. Then LeBlanc sent in trailer trucks loaded with the medicine. His salesmen, however, would let each drugstore operator have only a single case, saying that Hadacol was in short

[10] Interview with Wallace F. Janssen of FDA, June 19, 1956; *New Orleans Item*, Oct. 14, 1948; *Atlanta Constitution*, Sep. 21, 1948; *Baton Rouge Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1945; the Hadacol folder in the AMA's Dept. of Investigation contains a copy of *Good Health Life's Greatest Blessing*.

[11] *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1951; *FDC Reports*, Oct. 6, 1951; Stitt, "Cousin Dud's Hadacol," 7-15.

supply, but would be available through wholesalers. Son druggists ordered from every wholesaler. In two days th Hadacol trucks were empty.[12]

In 1950 Hadacol grossed at least $20 million within its sal area of 22 states, by far the largest sum spent for any propr tary in the world. And both sales and advertising were s expanding. Toward the close of the year, LeBlanc's advertisi bill ran to a million dollars a month, taking in about 700 da papers and 4,700 weeklies and 528 radio stations. For vari reasons, the style of his ads became, if not less subdued th earlier in the bayous, at least more circumspect. For one thi LeBlanc was aware that the Food and Drug Administrat was observing his operations with suspicious interest. Wher the Hadacol package labeling made no undue claims, F inspectors had noted what might be construed as mislead promises painted on LeBlanc's fleet of white trucks. Cl Inspector George Larrick, indeed, had notified the FDA of in New Orleans to trail a truck laden with Hadacol and, w it crossed a state line, to seize the cargo, alleging the tr slogans as mislabeling. Somehow LeBlanc became aware truck was being followed. He phoned Larrick in Washing to report that all trucks were being repainted. For anot thing, there was the FTC stipulation which LeBlanc signed. Although the trade press commented on the mildn of this restraint, the senator had promised to stop saying Hadacol would "restore youthful feeling and appearan that it would ensure "good health," indeed, that it posses any therapeutic value other than that resulting from a die deficiency of the ingredients it contained. So gone from Blanc's advertising were any references to asthma and to cer. As far as promises went, Hadacol was now good for v ailed you, if what ailed you was what Hadacol was good f

This message was, of course, more subtly phrased. On depicted a man laboriously climbing from a swamp over al insurmountable boulders atop which shone a glorious sun.

[12] Nevin, "The Brass-Band Pitchman," 24.

[13] *Business Week*, Jan. 6, 1951, 72; *PI*, 232 (Sep. 1, 1950), 77; i view with George Larrick, Aug. 4, 1965; FTC stipulation 8034. *Trade News*, 29 (Aug. 30, 1956), 6, gave Hadacol's 1950 gro $24,000,000.

boulders bore labels—fatigue, vague aches and pains, nervousness, tiredness, stomach bloat. Who among the readers had not suffered from one or another of these assorted ailments? And who would not yearn to escape such a "'rocky road' through life?" Yet, in deference to the FTC, LeBlanc added to each boulder, in addition to the big-print name of its malady, a small legend reading: "When due to lack of Vitamins B_1, B_2, Niacin and Iron."[14]

If heart trouble and epilepsy were gone from printed testimonials, tributes of gratitude involving lesser ailments still formed the backbone of Hadacol advertising. Hundreds of men, women, and children lauded the tonic from the pages of the press and over the airwaves. A septuagenarian minister who could neither eat with comfort nor sleep with ease noted "a wonderful change" before he had taken half a bottle. A lad of 13 who lacked energy even to ride his bicycle took Hadacol and became center on his football team. A rundown housewife who couldn't keep up with her housework began with the first bottle to regain her pep, and 15 bottles later was going strong. Names and addresses and photographs of these satisfied customers—most of them smiling buoyantly—accompanied their testimony. LeBlanc had aides who went out to follow up the letters that came pouring in. These letters came not from men and women of distinction, but from America's millions whose names seldom appeared in newspaper headlines. They worked on railroads, in retail stores, in pottery factories. Some were veterans of military service. Now and then a writer held local governmental responsibility, like the post of chairman of a county parole board. The reader who perused the testimonials found them penned by humble people like his neighbors and himself. If he was of religious bent, he might be pleased to note the devout praise of Hadacol from a clergyman. If he was awed by the health professions, he might find persuasive commendations from an apprenticed pharmacist and a nurse. If he held education in esteem, the happy Hadacol experience of college students might seem impressive.[15]

[14] *Atlanta Journal*, Apr. 12, 1951.

[15] *Ibid.*, Mar. 13 and Apr. 24, 1951; *Emory* (Univ.) *Wheel*, Mar. 27,

As he refurbished the testimonial, so too did LeBlanc exploit other stock techniques of the old-time nostrum vendor. He boastfully cited for all to read the statistics of Hadacol sales. Twenty million bottles in ten months. Twenty-seven million bottles in a year. Three great new factories. An endless caravan of white Hadacol-distributing trucks, each emblazoned "For a Better Tomorrow." Admitting his own amazement at a success outreaching his "wildest dreams," LeBlanc let his reader draw the inevitable conclusion: so many millions can't be wrong. But should a potential customer still remain skeptical, LeBlanc was willing to let him be the final judge. "You have to be satisfied," his ads assured; if you should find that Hadacol fails to help, take comfort in the fact that LeBlanc "*will gladly send back your money.*" So had promised the maker of Dr. William Judkin's Patent Specific Ointment in 1826.[16]

LeBlanc also resurrected the old-time medicine show and built it to gargantuan proportions. In the summer of 1950 a caravan of 130 vehicles, including steam calliopes, toured 3,800 miles through the South, LeBlanc's medicine troupe playing one-night stands in 18 cities. Heavy advertising heralded the show's approach, and each night, on the average, 10,000 fans brought their Hadacol box tops as admission fees to hear a Dixieland band play "Hadacol Boogie" and "Who Put the Pep in Grandma?," to watch Chicago chorus girls illustrate the history of the female bathing suit, and to observe the antics of such big-name performers as Connie Boswell, Carmen Miranda, Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Mickey Rooney, Chico Marx, George Burns, and Gracie Allen. LeBlanc himself served as master of ceremonies, posing with his show girls, joshing with his customers, and lauding in stentorian tones the virtues of the South.[17]

"I spent a cool half million for talent and stuff on this tour,"

1951; *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 13, 1951; Nevin, "The Brass-Band Pitchman," 26.

[16] *Atlanta Journal*, Nov. 11, 1950, Mar. 13, 1951.

[17] *Time*, 55 (June 19, 1950), 81-82; R. Raynolds and T. G. Harris, "Yahoo Hadacol!," *Life*, 29 (Sep. 18, 1950), 23-24 *passim*; Joseph Roddy, "Million-Dollar Medicine Man," *Look*, 14 (Dec. 5, 1950), 34-43.

LeBlanc boasted, "but I sold more than three million bucks' worth of Hadacol along the way." He also showed to tens of thousands of his fellow Southerners the brash, earthy, self-confident extrovert who made the Hadacol they paid for. A short, round man, wearing rimless glasses, a Texas hat, and black-and-white shoes, LeBlanc's bragging and chuckling and gaudy showmanship turned him into a celebrity, and this sold medicine. Those who saw the shows and read of LeBlanc's antics in the press knew him to be a man of humble origin, like themselves, who, in the great American tradition, had climbed the ladder of financial success by the exercise of native shrewdness.[18]

The senator followed up his Southern tour with an assault on the West Coast citadel of show business. Bolstered by Groucho Marx and Judy Garland, LeBlanc wound up his gigantic carnival with a month's stand in Los Angeles. All this was calculated to open up the Western market.[19]

The next summer LeBlanc began again with an even bigger show, traveling in a 17-car special train. Clowns kept the assembling crowds happy, taking long drinks from bottles of Hadacol, which lit up their false eyes and noses. Cesar Romero ran the performers through their paces, and there was something for almost everyone—a beauty contest for hometown talent, pony and bicycle prizes for the kids, both a sweet band and Dixieland, dancing girls, tumblers, comedians, songs from Carmen Miranda and Minnie Pearl, a midget and a man over nine feet tall ("before" and "after" taking Hadacol). Even Jack Dempsey took the stage, making a pitch for war bonds.[20]

What the youngsters, hoping to win a pony, thought of the Hadacol jokes that kept cropping up would be hard to guess. These tall and raw tales all aimed in one therapeutic direction —to imply that Hadacol possessed great merits as an aphrodisiac and as a sustainer and restorer of both male and female potency. Even before the shows, this legend had begun to

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Time*, 57 (Jan. 22, 1951), 60, 62; *Newsweek*, 37 (Apr. 16, 1951), 32-33; *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 16, 1951.

[20] *Atlanta Journal*, Aug. 12, 1951; *Atlanta Constitution*, Aug. 24, 1951; Hadacol Caravan Show souvenir program. The author attended the Atlanta show, Aug. 23, 1951.

spread across the South. Any and all old jokes, decent and indecent, which related to sexual prowess were dug up and revamped with the Hadacol label. The senator told them himself. It was reported that he had hired gagsters to accelerate the process. At any rate, Hadacol humor became a national sensation, approaching the epidemic proportions of jokes about the Model T or WPA. This triumph of folk culture, whatever his role in creating it, LeBlanc could not but welcome. In none of his printed advertising could Hadacol's claims rival its miraculous properties as circulated by word of mouth. And the FTC could not interfere. Potency appeal may well have provided a bigger market for Hadacol than the dread diseases of the abandoned testimonials.[21]

Another kind of "potency" concerning Hadacol also became the subject of widespread talk. Could the popularity of the tonic be due in some measure to the 12 per cent of alcohol that it contained? Was Hadacol a descendant of the long line of "boozers" and "bracers" with which patent medicine history was replete? LeBlanc laughingly brushed this possibility aside. Himself a devotee of Old Forrester, he could not see anyone's using Hadacol as a drink. It was just about as alcoholic as wine, and any drugstore had on its shelves a number of patent tonics of higher proof. Hadacol's label asserted that the alcohol was present "as a Preservative." It was hard to imagine a customer feeling the slightest titillation if he used Hadacol according to directions, spreading an ounce of alcohol over 16 doses taken during a period of four days.[22]

Nonetheless there was evidence that upon occasion the label directions were honored in the breach. In some areas of the South, dry by local option, druggists sold Hadacol by the shot. In certain Midwestern communities, where minors were forbidden to purchase liquor, Hadacol flowed freely at parties of the high school set. "Teen-agers," the executive of an Illinois village asserted, "can get plastered on Hadacol."[23]

[21] *Ibid.*; Stitt, "Cousin Dud's Hadacol," 13; Nevin, "The Brass-Band Pitchman," 26; Herbert Halpert, "Hadacol Stories," *Kentucky Folklore Record*, 2 (Jan.-Mar. 1956), 13-14.

[22] *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 28, 1951; Stitt, "Cousin Dud's Hadacol," 12-13; *Newsweek*, 37 (Apr. 16, 1951), 32.

[23] *Ibid.*; *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 15 and 28, 1951.

Insofar as it was used as a beverage, Hadacol must have been a drink of desperation. It was not cheap: depending on whether one bought the eight-ounce $1.25 bottle or the 24-ounce $3.50 "family economy size" jug, the "recommended adult daily intake" cost 31 or 29 cents, and the faithful disciple would spend over $100 a year. Wine, as LeBlanc was fond of pointing out, cost less. And Hadacol was not palatable in any usual sense. LeBlanc, who knew that the common citizen expected his medicine to taste somewhat nasty, thought Hadacol tasted like "dirt." "It contained vitamins," he explained, "and they come from dirt and that's how it tasted." Other samplers variously described the flavor as "musty," "metallic," "fishy," as similar to "weak iodine," "bilge water," "emasculated wine." The odor of the murky brown brew called forth remembrance of liniments and horse medicine. Indeed, one would suppose after a gingerly experimental sip, that inveterate users conditioned themselves to the flavor not for the sake of pleasure but from the sternest sense of duty.[24]

Despite LeBlanc's disclaimer and the handicaps of price and flavor, some steps were taken to treat the tonic as a liquor. The suburban village of Northbrook, near Chicago, banned the sale of Hadacol by any retail outlets except licensed liquor stores. An ordinance to the same effect, proposed in the Atlanta city council, brought Roland LeBlanc, Hadacol's chief chemist, to oppose the resolution. The committee, according to the minutes, "assured Mr. LeBlanc that the co-authors of the proposed resolution were not serious in their intent when they presented the ordinance." It did not become law, of course. More in earnest was the House of the Illinois General Assembly, which did pass a resolution entreating LeBlanc, in view of the alcohol in his product, to stop using testimonials of children. Citation of letters like that from the mother asserting that her daughters, aged two and three, "indulge in an occasional nip for their stomach's sake," the legislators decided, was advertising "of doubtful propriety."[25]

[24] Nevin, "The Brass-Band Pitchman," 26; friends of the author are responsible for the descriptions.

[25] *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 28, 1951; Police Committee of Atlanta Council minutes, Apr. 11, 1951, cited in letter to author from H. T. Jenkins, Chief of Police, May 11, 1951; *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 14, 1951; *JAMA*, 146 (June 9, 1951), 566; *Atlanta Journal*, Mar. 29, 1951.

If some governmental figures regarded Hadacol with skepticism, the same was more markedly true of members of the medical profession. This must have disappointed LeBlanc, for he strove diligently to win the approval of doctors just as he sought in his advertising to convey the impression that Hadacol possessed the sanction of orthodox medicine. The phrase kept reappearing, "HADACOL is recommended by many doctors." LeBlanc explained that all efforts at "improving" his tonic were undertaken under the control of a medical director, Dr. L. A. Willey, who supervised the "clinical" activity of "20 other medical experts throughout the country."[26]

By means of letters bearing Willey's facsimile signature, LeBlanc appealed to physicians in many areas to give consideration to Hadacol as an "ethical proprietary." He would gladly send samples. "We cordially invite you," his research director wrote, "to conduct clinical tests, among a group of your own patients, with HADACOL . . . on a fee basis per patient."[27]

If LeBlanc won any recruits from the ranks of physicians by his stratagem, the doctors enlisted against the counsel of the American Medical Association. "It is to be hoped," reported the AMA's Bureau of Investigation in the pages of the *Journal*, "that no doctors of medicine will be uncritical enough to join in the promotion of Hadacol as an ethical preparation. It is difficult to imagine how one could do himself or his profession greater harm, from the standpoint of the abuse of the trust of a patient suffering from any condition. Hadacol is not specific medication. It is not even a specific preventive measure. It could not be eligible for serious consideration by the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry."[28]

The Bureau of Investigation had other stern things to say. The only L. A. Willey for whom a record could be found was a man who had been convicted in California of calling himself a doctor though he had no medical degree and of practicing

[26] *New Orleans Item*, Dec. 17, 1950; "Hadacol—the Ethical(?) Proprietary," *JAMA*, 145 (Jan. 13, 1951), 107-108.

[27] *Ibid.*; copy of Willey letter, Nov. 6, 1950, in Hadacol folder in the AMA's Dept. of Investigation.

[28] *JAMA*, 145 (Jan. 13, 1951), 107-108.

medicine though he had no license. As to the dangers of Hadacol, the Bureau had in its files a letter from an Arkansas doctor, telling of a diabetic patient who gave up insulin to treat herself with Hadacol; she immediately went into a diabetic coma and almost died. As to Hadacol's therapeutic merits, the Bureau made the significant statement, "Although Hadacol has been advertised to the laity as being a more assimilable form of administration for the vitamins, neither the *U.S. Pharmacopeia* nor the Council [on Pharmacy and Chemistry] recognizes alcoholic elixirs containing these substances as a dosage form."

What then was Hadacol good for? One answer was that which occurred to LeBlanc himself when the question was put to him by Groucho Marx on television. Hadacol, replied its maker smilingly, "was good for five and a half million for me last year."[29]

So, into 1951, the Hadacol bandwagon rolled on. There seemed no bottom to LeBlanc's promotional bag of tricks. He circulated Captain Hadacol comic books loaded with advertising. He lured children into salesmanship with such prizes as luminescent T-shirts. He sponsored theater parties, admission by box top. He installed in railroad terminals three-dimensional displays of healthy, well-molded maidens beside the familiar Hadacol package. He let it be widely known he was looking for a parrot who could repeat clearly and often "Polly wants Hadacol." When found, Polly would travel about the country to drugstores and sales conventions in a limousine bearing her name in gold.[30]

As sales mounted and LeBlanc's fame spread, the senator looked covetously again at the Louisiana governorship. Some of his advertising, perhaps, had been subtly aimed in that direction all along. Once again following in the tradition of his predecessors, LeBlanc presented himself to the nation as a great humanitarian. In his advertising ventures, he exploited both his own colorful personality and his political career. LeBlanc the man, LeBlanc the humanitarian, and LeBlanc the statesman stood before the public as a mighty three-in-one.

[29] Martin Gardner, *In the Name of Science*, 229.

[30] *Business Week*, Jan. 6, 1951, 76; *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 1, 1950, Feb. 19, 1951; the railroad station display was seen in Cincinnati.

"Senator" was invariably prefixed to LeBlanc's name in Hadacol promotion. His legislative achievements were included in the advertising record to validate his claim to the title "Humanitarian Statesman, and Great Friend of the People." He had "always championed the cause of the oppressed, the poor and the underprivileged." He was, he said, "the first candidate for governor to advocate Old Age Pensions." He claimed credit for the $50 monthly pension then being paid to "the deserving senior citizens of Louisiana." He was a proponent of legislation for veterans and "successfully enacted into law a measure providing for the selection of a service commissioner" to ensure justice for Louisiana veterans from the state and national governments. Moreover, "during his entire political career, he . . . never cast a ballot or vote against a man or woman who must toil to earn his or her livelihood."[31]

How was LeBlanc's humanitarian statesmanship related to Hadacol? It was "because his heart has always beat in sympathy with the cause of the oppressed, the infirm, the lame and the sickly, [that] through endless effort and study he has developed today's great HADACOL, one more addition to his long record of service to humanity."[32]

Other incidents reveal LeBlanc's shrewdness in associating with his remedy the forces of political power and prestige. When General Douglas MacArthur was called home from Korea and his name was dominating headlines, LeBlanc reaped headlines of his own by offering MacArthur a Hadacol vice-presidency. Earlier LeBlanc, even though a Southerner, reached back into history and came up with Abraham Lincoln. A large ad presented the faces of both Lincoln and LeBlanc, with quotations from them both. The Lincoln citation, it happens, was a garbled version of the statement which historians have not been able to establish that Lincoln ever made, the one about fooling the people. After the quotation there followed this line: "'You were right, Mr. Lincoln,' says Senator Dudley J. LeBlanc."[33]

[31] *Atlanta Journal*, Mar. 13, 1951. [32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 16, 1951; *Atlanta Journal*, Nov. 11, 1950. The same fooling-the-people quotation had been used 50 years before to promote Hale's Honey of Horehound and Tar for the Cure of Coughs and Colds. *Amer. Messenger*, 58 (Mar. 1900), 47.

LeBlanc forged yet one more link between patent medicine and politics. On his grand excursions through the South, he had himself photographed in animated conversation with other political figures. An issue of *Look* carried pictures of the Louisiana state senator conferring separately with the mayor of Baton Rouge, the mayor of New Orleans, and the governor of Alabama. "Senator," Governor "Kissin' Jim" Folsom was saying, "that sure is some medicine business you got."[34]

To LeBlanc, then, politics and patent medicines were a reversible reaction. He used his political career to promote Hadacol; he also used Hadacol to promote his political career. Defeated twice for the Louisiana governorship by Long machines, LeBlanc looked toward another try against another Long machine in 1952. The senator's friends worked hard at building up draft-Dudley sentiment, and after some pretense of coyness LeBlanc yielded. Spreading the gospel through his advertising that he was "the best friend the poor people ever had," LeBlanc also insisted he would be good for business. The state's greatest need, he said, was a sure-fire promoter to persuade the outside world, skeptical of Longism, that Louisiana was a pretty fine place for industrial investment. And what better promoter than the millionaire state senator? LeBlanc, a shrewd observer noted, was "widely respected as a money maker, a man who built something out of nothing," and at the same time was regarded as "a slightly comic figure, which doesn't hurt him here." Commentators began to predict that LeBlanc had a chance to win. The Longs got worried. They determined to fight fire with fire. They started a patent medicine of their own.[35]

It's a pity, in a way, that the campaign could not have been fought out in this pseudo-medical atmosphere, between Hadacol and Vita-Long, up to the day of the voting. But in midstream LeBlanc sold his horse. The senator had claimed shortly

[34] Roddy, "Million-Dollar Medicine Man," 34-43.

[35] Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 186, 234-35; Perry H. Howard, *Political Tendencies in Louisiana, 1812-1952* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 163; T. Harry Williams to author, May 6, 1951. The Food and Drug Administration eventually brought a seizure action against Vita-Long, which was uncontested. DDNJ 3811.

before that Hadacol sales might reach $75 million for 1951. He was in the midst of his second fabulous summer medicine show tour. So his announcement, in August, that he had let Hadacol go took the nation by surprise. It soon became known that the price was $8 million, of which a quarter million was in cash, the rest to be paid from profits through the years, and LeBlanc was to stay on as sales manager at an annual salary of $100,000. The buyer was the Tobey-Maltz Foundation of New York, organized for cancer research by a plastic surgeon, which quickly leased the tonic to a syndicate of Northern businessmen.[36]

Within a very short time the Yankee purchasers let it be known they had been stung. Hadacol's books were not what they had seemed to be to the New York accountants who had examined them before the sale. LeBlanc, the new owners charged, had concealed two million dollars in unpaid bills, and more than another two million, listed as assets under "accounts receivable," was really Hadacol out on consignment, a great deal of which was flowing back. The whole enterprise had become vastly overextended. Even while the senator had continued his flamboyant drumbeating, the market had passed the saturation point. The new owners went into bankruptcy; the creditors organized. LeBlanc had shrewdly wriggled out just in the nick of time. "If you sell a cow," he told the press, "and the cow dies, you can't do anything to a man for that."[37]

But the senator had other troubles. The FTC, believing his latter-day advertising had violated his earlier stipulation, issued a complaint. The Bureau of Internal Revenue charged him with owing some $650,000 in income taxes. And, despite the glee Louisiana voters took in the trick he had pulled on Yankee city slickers, the bursting Hadacol bubble killed his gubernatorial hopes. LeBlanc sought to secure the post of lieutenant-governor on the ticket of several of his rivals and,

[36] *Business Week*, Jan. 6, 1951, 72, 74; *N.Y. Times*, Aug. 28 and 31, 1951.

[37] *Chicago Tribune*, Sep. 21 and Nov. 5, 1951; *N.Y. Times*, Sep. 27 and Oct. 4, 1951; *FDC Reports*, Oct. 6, 1951. The financial aftermath of the Hadacol crash dragged on for nearly a decade. *Chicago Daily News*, May 6, 1960; *Chicago Tribune*, May 7, 1960.

fading campaign [illegible] until the end. When the votes were counted, Coozan Dud wound up in seventh place.[38]

The Hadacol trade name lived on but never recouped an iota of its erstwhile fame. LeBlanc himself sought to carry on. After a time, indeed, he launched a new tonic, and Kary-On was its name. But it did not carry the senator either to his former fortunes or to the governorship.[39]

Hadacol in its heyday, however, and its colorful promoter, penetrated Southern folklore, and the myth of both is still widely remembered with a certain amused fondness. The millions needlessly expended, or spent for Hadacol instead of proper medical care, tend to be forgotten.

[38] Complaint, Sep. 28, 1951, in FTC Docket 5925 (this was eventually dismissed on the grounds that LeBlanc no longer had a voice in the control of the business, 50 *FTC Decisions* 1028); *N.Y. Times*, Sep. 21, 1951; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, 234-35, 238.

[39] Several efforts were made to revive Hadacol sales. FTC Docket 5925; *PI*, 248 (Nov. 19, 1954), 108; *FDC Reports*, Dec. 24, 1962; *Drug Trade News*, Aug. 15, 1966. On Kary-On: *FDC Reports*, Feb. 20, 1954; May 23 and July 18, 1955; Jan. 23, 1956; 52 *FTC Decisions* 607; *Newsweek*, 55 (Feb. 22, 1960), 84.

18

"YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT"

"After studying the eating habits of the American people for a number of years, I found thirty distinct Disease Conditions: vitamin-deficient, mineral-starved, cooked food-enervated, sun-cheated, clothes-insulated, coffee-soaked, spice-irritated, tobacco-poisoned, constipation-befouled, oxygen-deprived, sugar-acidified, meat-polluted, starch-clogged, salt-ified, mustard-plastered, pepperized, jelly-bowled, pop-bloated, vinegar-jagged, chocolate-coated, mashed and creamed, toasted and roasted, ice-cubed, tea-tannined, sauce-jaded, night-hawks, morning-deadheads, heat-treated, sex-depleted, and gravy-saturated. That's the average human being today."

—ADOLPHUS HOHENSEE, LECTURE IN DENVER, 1952[1]

"HADACOL was a very, very meritorious product," insisted its inventor, Dudley J. LeBlanc, in talking with a reporter a decade after the B-vitamin tonic boom had collapsed. "Who is to say that those people weren't helped for those ailments? The doctors? Who can believe them? No, my friend, there's still much that's not known about nutrition."[2]

About one thing, at least, LeBlanc was right. Nutrition, as a science, was as yet incomplete. Because of what was not yet known and the complexity of what *was* known, nutrition, during the 20th century, has provided a happy hunting ground for those who would beguile the American public into buying their questionable wares.

[1] FDA file on Hohensee, Interstate Sample No. 14-497L, FDA Records, Washington.

[2] David Nevin, "The Brass-Band Pitchman and His Million-Dollar Elixir," *True*, March 1962, 26.

. . . from Washington Post, Sunday, 7 Jul 74 p E 4

Nature of the Medium

Complexity of Television: More Than Meets the Eye

By Alan M. Kriegsman

People are used to worrying about deceptive advertising on TV, but what about everything else on the tube? It's quite possible that we habitually ignore or overlook some hard questions of veracity which deeply affect all aspects of telecommunications.

This concern was the point of origin for a four-day conference on "Television: Art and Information," held at Airlie House last week under the auspices of San Francisco's National Center for Experiments in Television (NCETV).

The event was not only livelier than most such talkfests; it also proved, if nothing else, that the problems addressed were anything but idle. Deciding what is "real" or "authentic" or "in the public interest" on television isn't just a philosophical conundrum. We make such judgments, consciously or otherwise, every time we confront the box, and so do those whose business it is to furnish the continuous stream of audiovisual hubub which comes across on it.

Television, though, is such a pervasive and unremitting presence in our lives, more so than chairs, aspirin or radial tires, that we tend to take not only its existence but its content for granted. "I saw it on TV last night" has become a cultural shibboleth which is liable to be invoked in justification of almost any opinion, conviction or fact.

Perhaps because TV has a greater capacity than other media for immediate, on-the-spot, multidimensional transmission of real events as they happen, we are subliminally predisposed to accept any telecast as a reflection of actuality, and much more so than we are in the case of printed matter or motion pictures.

At the same time, we all know that the greatest proportion of material broadcast on every channel is pure contrivance. The difficulty in keeping our head straight comes from the fact that the borderlines are so indistinct. A good deal of the time, it's either hard or impossible to tell merely by looking whether we're watching fact or fiction, documentary or dramatization, program or commercial. The difficulty is compounded by the tune-in, drop-out nature of the medium, which encourages intermittent, sporadic or cross-channel viewing.

The value of the recent NCETV conference was that it refused to let these distinctions slip by, and instead, insisted on making issues out of them. The discussion and debate didn't result in anything terribly concrete, and surely nothing so palpable as a recipe for avoiding mendacity or delusion on TV. But what did emerge was a heightened awareness of the complexity of the medium, and of its ubiquitous pitfalls for the unwary.

What kept the talk vital was the multiplicity of viewpoints among the conferees. The focus was mainly on public television, so there were representatives of PBS, CPB and the major production centers of the system, including Washington's WETA and NPACT. There were station managers and programmers from all over the Northeast. There were also producers, directors, filmmakers, artists, critics, estheticians, historians, educators and even a psychiatrist, along with people from the National Endowments on the Arts and Humanities and the leading private foundations.

"Television, though, is such a pervasive and unremitting presence in our lives, more so than chairs, aspirin or radial tires, that we tend to take not only its existence but its content for granted."

With such a variety of inputs coming from the makers, the funders and the recipients of television, a constant abrasion of priorities, standards and interests enlivened the dialogue and steered it persistently toward fruitful conflict.

"One man's deceit is another man's white lie," someone said in the course of a session, and it seemed to sum up much of what the conferees had discovered about the relation between intention and execution in the genesis of TV programs. The motivation of those who conceive and create program material is often fairly lofty, particularly where public television is concerned. But compromises, some due to time and fiscal pressure, some to esthetic considerations and some to the strains of competing objectives, have a way of intervening between the idea and the act.

A few examples may help to convey some of the flavor of the conference.

One morning's session began with a screening of "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," the award-winning CBS dramatic special based on Ernest J. Gaines' novel, which starred Cicely Tyson as Jane, a black woman of the South whose 110 years spanned both slavery and the '60s Civil Rights movement. Afterwards, NCETV director Paul Kaufman showed a videotaped interview he had made with the special's director, John Korty. The conference discussion had centered on the tension between fictional glamor and historical verisimilitude, and on this very point Korty's remarks shed revealing light.

The by-now celebrated, emotional ending, for instance, with Jane drinking from a segregated water fountain, was not at all Korty's idea---he wanted to stick to the book. But the producer insisted on concluding, Korty said, with "a Hollywood payoff," and that's the way it was done, despite miserable shooting conditions.

Kaufman added that Korty had also told him that he was obliged, despite his desire for a natural flow of movement and shadow, to always shoot Tyson in a strong light in order to show off her makeup, the tour-de-force which the producers hoped would be the selling point of the show.

Did the result, as some claimed, transmit a kind of "mythic" truth about black lifestyles despite such machinations, or did it, as others contended, merely perpetuate historically false stereotypes? Was the audience likely to have been "taken in" by the documentary style of the dramatization, and if so, was this defensible? Such were the kinds of questions the conferees posed and debated.

Similar questions, from a somewhat different vantage point, arose after the viewing of some pilot footage for "The Adams Chronicles," the recently announced $4 million PBS series scheduled for telecast during the 1975-76 Bicentennial season.

Here the starting point is a historical record, the lives and careers of the Adams family through 150 years of American political evolution. And the "program" was not a finished product but a work in progress, with many parameters still fluid. Yet what the viewing and the discussion showed was that many of the same dilemmas have to be faced. The writers and directors still have to balance desire for historical fidelity against a need to stir and hold the interest of a mass audience. They must cope with a plethora of problems, of location, of casting, of conceptual approach, which derive from this initial dichotomy. How does one, for example, introduce figures such as Washington and Franklin as "secondary" characters in the drama of the Adamses and still preserve a sense of historical proportion? Is the gain of using historical sites, such as old Colonial houses, worth the loss in dramatic flexibility due to constricted interiors?

Other sessions were devoted to social documentaries, public affairs programming, newly developing video technology and other matters. But one final example from the arts may help to demonstrate how the same basic enigmas cropped up in the most seemingly innocent contexts. "Bolero," an Academy Award short subject made for public television, was shown one day as an illustration of an imaginative solution to the challenge of making a symphonic performance into a visually arresting experience. It was universally admired by the conferees, but afterwards, when the producer explained that the audio wasn't "live," but supplied by a prior tape, some onlookers were so perturbed by this they even resorted to the word "dishonest." There wasn't any question here of deceitful intentions. The fact is, the visual sophistication of "Bolero" could not have been achieved without separating the recording of sound and image. Yet as soon as viewers become sensitized to issues of authenticity, funny things begin to happen. Television, in short, is never as simple as it may sometimes appear.

TV is not a lonely product like a book.

The Social Value Of TV Thrillers

By Benjamin Stein

Recently Michael J. Arlen, writing in The New Yorker, noted that, "Intellectuals in America make much of their disdain for television—for regular television programming. And the mass of people make much of their disdain for intellectuals and their artifacts—notably serious novels and serious films." The first part of Mr. Arlen's thesis is undoubtedly sound, and just to show which side he is on, he shows disdain for television programming.

His disdain is in the form of an essay lamenting the moral content of American

On Television

adventure television programming. It is outmoded and not really very adventurous, he says. It is simply a remnant of some earlier time, which we should by now have outgrown on television, as we as a nation are outgrowing it in other areas. Instead of upright, highly moral heroes and evil villains, with the former always beating the latter, Mr. Arlen prefers animal shows, in which some creatures eat other creatures without regard to who is right or wrong. That, he says, is real adventure.

It so happened that about the same time as Mr. Arlen's essay appeared, I ran across another essay on television, this one by Michael J. Robinson, a teacher at Catholic University, prepared under the auspices of the Aspen Institute. That paper is entitled "American Political Legitimacy in an Era of Electronic Journalism: Reflections on the Evening News." Its well-documented thesis, as I understand it, is that people who depend upon television as their primary or exclusive source of news about their country are exposed to such negative scrutiny of their national institutions that they become at first confused and frustrated about government and politics, then hostile towards government and politics themselves, then pass on this hostility to others who do not rely as heavily on television as a source of news. Television news, he concludes, is seriously, although not fatally, undermining the legitimacy, in the public's eyes, of our democracy.

What I got from Mr. Arlen's essay and Mr. Robinson's paper if combined is that television which tends to present the world as a dismal, randomly cruel place tends to make viewers see their world as similar, and that Mr. Arlen would like to see more of that. It would in some way be healthier for television viewers to be under no "illusions" about the nature of their world.

In the light of Prof. Robinson's evidence, Mr. Arlen's views take on an especially disturbing aspect. If television adventures were to become amoral and random and then be forgotten as soon as the shows were over, they would be an interesting and harmless experiment. But apparently (and to be fair, Mr. Robinson's theory is only the application of a well-known theme to the nightly news) television sells its values as well as its soaps and detergents. So adventure shows which depicted existential man groping pathetically in a Hobbesian jungle might tend to make viewers see America that way.

That is about the last thing society needs and would make of television a virtual doomsday weapon.

When I thought about the dreadful scenario that might unfold if Mr. Arlen's programming suggestions were picked up, I began to think that the television networks had missed a bet in defending their adventure shows. When those shows come under attack for being pointlessly violent, the stock network defense is that television does not change people's actual behavior —does not make people violent.

A far better defense, especially since the other defense has been discredited, is that the adventure-violence shows have offsetting social content—that the shows are not entirely pointlessly violent but have a very real point. The moral is that the bad, evil people who lead criminal, antisocial lives, are punished. Thus it pays to be a good, moral person.

Further, the adventure shows generally, although not always, portray the forces of the law as superior and more worthy of imitation than the forces of crime. That is a powerfully important message, and if television is selling it as well as it sells laxatives, adventure shows must be one of the primary stabilizing forces in America today.

Professor Robinson coined a word to describe the effects of the television news: "dispatriation." It means an effect of destroying faith and trust in national institutions. By and large, television adventure shows, I believe, have just the opposite effect, something that might be called "patriation." They encourage belief in moral values, in law, in government institutions.

If they do have that effect, they are far from being outmoded. They are current and desperately needed. And in their popularity, despite many people's contempt for them, is some evidence that the large mass of American people still prefer "patriating" values and like to have them reinforced. If "Kojak" and "The Rookies" and "Police Story" and the like have the effect I think they do, they are selling us on our own society, and it is important that the sale be made.

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The Network Circus

By William V. Shannon

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2—Another television season is about to begin. But like the annual changes in automobiles or the circus, only the details are new. There are three television networks as there are three major producers of automobiles or three rings at the circus. Each network competes fiercely against the other two, but the competition is only in trivia at the margins—a different face, a different format—since all three have long since settled upon the least common denominator of popular taste and the most secure routes to pleasing it.

The automobile, for all its significance in our lives, is only a mechanical contrivance and the circus a once-a-year pleasure, but television pervasively affects our minds. As our most powerful medium of entertainment and of news, it has changed our politics, our view of ourselves as a people, and even the way our minds work. If we are a less happy, less confident, less intelligent people than we were thirty years ago, a generation of television watching is largely responsible.

Television stresses violence. According to a survey by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, nearly three-quarters of the programs aired in the 1973-74 season contained violence. Another study estimated that by age 14, the ordinary child has been exposed to 11,000 murders on television.

The effect of televised violence in producing juvenile delinquency is secondary and indirect. That is, the viewer is emotionally disturbed and prone to violence for specific, personal reasons. The effect of television is to release his inhibitions, provide a how-to-do-it model, and create fashions in certain kinds of crime. But even these marginal adverse influences are serious inasmuch as every index of childhood unhappiness is rising—the rate of suicide, of violent crime, of runaways.

A less-talked-about but profoundly disquieting development is the decline in intellectual achievement among today's youth. For four years, scholastic aptitude tests have registered a small but steady drop in the knowledge mastered by college freshmen. Reading scores among elementary school children are lower than a decade ago.

It could hardly be otherwise when the majority of children watch television three to four hours a day throughout their growing years, and one-quarter of all children watch television more than five hours a day every day. Television is primarily a medium of entertainment. Moreover, it is entertainment that provides instant gratification and requires no effort, no act of imagination. Physiologists report that the brain waves of a person watching television are similar to those of a person asleep.

Children become accustomed to paying attention in half-hour segments or, even worse, in the six-minute intervals between commercials. The combined effect of passivity, of a shortened attention span, and of so much time devoted to entertainment is to subvert education and malnourish the mind.

One of network television's proudest accomplishments is also deeply flawed. That is its coverage of news. The problem is not the fake issue of ideological bias raised for self-interested political reasons by the Nixon Administration. It is the much more fundamental problem, as television newsmen themselves recognize, of the nature of the medium TV is pictorial and puts a premium on vivid action.

As the British critic T. R. Fyvel has observed, "Professional television pressures work constantly towards portraying action and not thought, personalities and not issues, what is visually happening and not the boring explanations why."

The effect of the evening news shows is unintentionally to magnify and distort existing social strains. This intense, apocalyptic view of reality disseminates anxiety and uneasiness throughout society.

Economic pressure to get high ratings adversely affects how local and network television news shows are presented. High ratings mean more advertising income. When the networks extended their national news shows from 15 minutes to 30 minutes in 1963—time that was taken away from local stations—they gained five additional minutes for network commercials. Those five minutes a night earned CBS $36 million in a year.

Television can never be substantially reformed as long as it remains solely in the hands of businessmen preoccupied with packaging the largest possible audiences for sale to hard-sell advertisers. This country made a fundamental error when it allowed this enormously powerful medium to become a high-profit, fast-growth industry. Since government is not to be trusted with a communications monopoly, television channels ought to be controlled by churches, universities, foundations, and non-profit associations of writers, directors and actors.

The coming of cable television with its multitude of channels could provide society with an escape route from today's claustrophobic network circus. But will this new technology receive the benefit of more inmaginative and foresighted public policy than did radio or television?

should be covered—I think they're an abomination. They're there to advise you about how to increase your audience and performing a proper journalistic function is not necessarily consistent with increasing your audience."

In a field that is rife with squabbles, Magid seems to attract more than his share. The country is dotted with disgruntled TV news personnel who have suffered at the hands of Magid and his associates. And many broadcast journalists point out that the more a newscast is filled with pre-tested service items like "Dollars and Sense" the less time there will be for hard news. "You gotta fill up the board with a whole horseload of stories," says a prize-winning investigative reporter who recently left one of Magid's midwest ABC clients. "It's the kind of thing that weights the priorities against investigative reporting."

But Magid says that in the future there will be room for everybody who is competent, because the market for broadcast talent is steadily growing, and there will be time for everything, because news programs themselves are steadily growing. From 15-minute affairs as late as 1965 (in New York) and 1966 (in Chicago), local newscasts have grown to half-hour length, to one hour, to one-and-a-half and now to two hours. In 10 years, he adds, he sees the larger markets presenting a three-hour newscast. (Actually, this is a tame prophecy; at least one broadcasting company—CBS—is known to be preparing for the advent of 24-hour, all-news television stations.)

Despite such assurances, some news executives continue to resent the consultant and the way he plies his trade. One of the most outspoken of these is Ralph Renick, news director and anchorman at WTVJ-TV in Miami. Early in 1974, the Magid firm recommended that the station change the title of its top-rated early-evening newscast, "The Ralph Renick Report," to "The World Tonight," and that it pair Renick with a younger co-anchorperson. Renick returned the compliment by hiring three men with academic credentials in attitudinal research to evaluate Magid's WTVJ survey.

The trio delivered a 25-page critique which charged that the survey's average interview length of 70 minutes was "far too long to maintain respondents' attention," that its questionnaire insinuated pre-set responses, that its interpretation of the data was "misleading" and that its disregard of Miami's Spanish-speaking TV audience was "a fatal flaw." WTVJ subsequently let its contract with Magid expire. Since then, Renick has been regarded by anti-Magid forces as something of a spiritual leader whose guidance news directors seek when they learn that Magid is hustling business at their station. "These guys call you," says Renick, "and it's like the grim reaper has finally appeared at the door."

Magid, who makes it a practice always to approach first the general manager of a station—not the news director—with his proposals, is aware of the disquietude he causes among newsmen. His response is lofty and unperturbed. "We do recognize that we're going to incur the wrath of the traditionalists," he told me before slipping off in his silver 230 SL Mercedes to the airport and the start of another profit-seeking peregrination. "New ideas are always in danger of being beaten to death by those whose apple-carts they upset." ■

TV VIEW

JOHN J. O'CONNOR

The 3-Way Race For Mediocrity

What is the "reality" of television? Volumes, valuable volumes, have been written about the more philosophic aspects of the medium as mirror or purveyor of shadows in a Platonk cave. But a definition has yet to be formulated on a considerably more practical level. For the vast majority of American broadcasters, and for a good many supposedly objective observers of the industry TV reality is embedded in balance sheets showing healthy and growing profits. For many professional critics and, I suspect, an expanding portion of the general public, television is a depressing landscape of mediocre programing.

Part of the problem at network levels is the grooming of an executive type who works furiously in the service of abstract audience ratings but rarely takes time out to sit down and actually watch television. The process breeds cynicism. At the local level, affiliates worry if the networks will be able to put together a "successful" season for them. In Houston recently at a gathering of broadcasters, I found most station representatives talking about "hardware," new computer systems that would prove helpful to advertising salesmen. Yes, the new season was uncommonly embarrassing, but let's not worry about that too much. Let's wait to see how the ratings fall into place.

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When confronted with an argument for "quality" programing, some representatives insisted on confusing the issue. For them, quality is synonomous with Philharmonic concerts and "serious" culture, the kind of thing that, sin of free-enterprise sins, gets low ratings on public television. But, of course, the boundaries of quality are broad and hardly exclusive of high ratings (consider "All in the Family" or "The Waltons" or "Kojak")

The incredible TV machine, however, not only rumbles on but also accelerates. Recently, Marvin Antonowsky, program chief of the NBC television network, explained how "Fay," a new comedy series starring Lee Grant, came to be canceled so early in the new season. It seems innovative audience-measurement tools are at hand in the land of electronics. Joining the Nielsen numbers is something called the Trendex "call-back" system, whereby households in 25 cities are asked what shows they have watched and if they plan to watch them again. A good many people, not surprisingly, didn't plan to watch "Fay" again.

Television, then, has another gadget that enables Mr. Antonowsky and his confreres "to act quickly and dispassionately." As he puts it, "fast input makes possible fast output." But none of this has anything necessarily to do with better programs. One mediocre program can be yanked because of low ratings. Another can be inserted and possibly survive because of

Lee Grant, star of the recently canceled series "Fay"—an early victim of the industry's new "fast input, fast output."

not-so-low ratings. Mr. Antonowsky explains further, in one of the more revealing remarks about the mechanics of TV: "The price of failure looms too large for us not to make the pragmatic decisions that are necessary, even though we may not like doing it." What, precisely, is that "price of failure"? Mediocrity? Hardly. Try something more pragmatic, like ratings, corporate profits, the possibility of being fired.

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Admittedly, it would be foolhardy for the television critic to ignore the matter of profitability. For better or worse, American television rests, primarily, on a foundation of commercial interests, and the formative patterns of operation are solidly entrenched. But it is in the interest of everyone, the country as a whole, that commercial considerations not be allowed to become the only governing criterion for a medium of such awesome pervasiveness.

However, the future, the super-age in which "fast input makes possible fast output," does not look promising. For example, this season's big story, at least for the first few weeks, was ABC's moving into a "competitive" ratings position with CBS and NBC, both of which showed rating drops. If ABC "maintains strength," the network will have a big "success" story. Its top executives will be profiled in trade and business magazines. Praise will flow freely in corporate suites. Few will bother to notice that "Welcome Back, Kotter" and "Starsky and Hutch," two of the more successful new series for ABC, remain dreadful shows.

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Again, quality does not have to mean a steady diet of specials such as "Long Day's Journey Into Night," "The Glass Menagerie" with Katharine Hepburn, Joseph Papp's production of "Wedding Band," "Antony and Cleopatra," or Laurence Olivier in "The Merchant of Venice"—all productions carried on ABC. Quality of another sort can be found in the weekly series "Baretta," or at least in Robert Blake's performance as a Jimmy Cagney/John Garfield type of undercover cop. In fact, ABC deserves credit for saving this show, for switching its time period and getting an audience.

But all the switching in the world is not going to save clinkers like "Barbary Coast" or "Mobile One" or "Matt Helm." At a recent meeting with reporters and editors of this newspaper, Frederick Pierce, president of the ABC TV network, implied that such salvaging might be possible, but his position for the defense was noticeably half-hearted.

When asked if the closer three-way competition among the networks would be of some benefit to the public, Mr. Pierce replied that vigorous competition in the free-enterprise system traditionally made for a better product. This seemingly perfect logic, though, ignores the "lowest-common-denominator" nature of the mass-programing beast. Trapped in a downward spiral of, say, ABC's "Starsky and Hutch," CBS's "Bronk" and NBC's "The Invisible Man," the lowest in terms of quality could very well turn out to be the highest in terms of ratings. Success, once again, becomes meaningless and rather embarrassing.

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Mr. Fish, who was working in a quiet job for the Moreland Commission when he stepped forward to aid Ophuls last May, has no money of his own in the deal and has labored without pay to iron out the film's contractual problems (a few details remain unsettled). "I'm practically broke, but I've learned an awful lot about the film business," says Fish.

After finishing the film in London, Ophuls recently returned to the United States and has started work as a documentary producer-director for CBS News; he has also signed a contract with Random House to write a book about his experiences in the film business.

—DAVID DENBY

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The First Amendment Reconsidered

By Ed Cony

Could the First Amendment, with its guarantee of a free press, be ratified today? Some of us in the press think not. Some of us even are ready to write obituaries of the First Amendment.

But perhaps we are being premature. On two occasions last year, the First Amendment appeared hale—if not downright hardy.

In midyear, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously struck down a Florida law that required a newspaper to give any political candidate it criticized the right to reply—equal space in an equally prominent place in the paper.

The Miami Herald in September 1972 had printed two editorials attacking Pat Tornillo Jr., who was running for the Florida House. When the newspaper refused to print Mr. Tornillo's replies, he sued.

In delivering the court's opinion, Chief Justice Burger presented the arguments advanced by Mr. Tornillo's lawyers:

> The government has a duty to see that a wide variety of views reach the public. In the early days the press fulfilled this role, serving as "a true marketplace of ideas." But today, newspapers are big business and there are fewer of them. To a great extent the press has become noncompetitive and enormously powerful "in its capacity to manipulate popular opinion and change the course of events." Further, the press today engages in "interpretative reporting" and sometimes in "advocacy journalism."
>
> Thus, wrote the Chief Justice, "it is reasoned that the only effective way to insure fairness and accuracy and to provide for some accountability is for government to take affirmative action. The First Amendment interest of the public is said to be in peril because the 'marketplace of ideas' is today a monopoly controlled by the owners of the market."

But the Chief Justice refused to buy this argument. He found "the core question" in the case to be the issue of "compelling editors or publishers to publish that which 'reason' tells them should not be published."

From there he went on to this conclusion:

> "The Florida statute fails to clear the barriers of the First Amendment because of its intrusion into the function of editors. A newspaper is more than a passive receptacle or conduit for news, comment and advertising. The choice of material to go into a newspaper and the decisions made as to limitations on the size of the paper, and content, and treatment of public issues and public officials—whether fair or unfair—constitute the exercise of editorial control and judgment. It has yet to be demonstrated how governmental regulation of this crucial process can be exercised consistent with First Amendment guarantees of a free press."

Dow Jones' Position

We should say that Dow Jones & Co., publisher of this newspaper, intervened in the Tornillo case, submitting a joint brief with the New York Times Co. The two publishing concerns said in their brief that they are committed to disseminating the views of all elements of society: "Editorially, they have published in the pages of their newspapers information from many sources and a multitude of viewpoints which vary from those held by the publishers and editors."

But they argued that if the Florida law were left standing, it would actually restrict the airing of diverse political views:

> "Every page one story about legislators or other elected officials may carry with it the possibility the legislator or official will be the author of a portion of a future front page. It is painfully clear that those conditions will lead not to debate but to a stifling degree of restraint in political reporting by newspapers."

Several months after the Tornillo decision, the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press received another ringing endorsement, this time from an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. On November 2, Potter Stewart made a provocative speech at the celebration of the Yale Law School's 150th anniversary.

Mr. Stewart began by contending that it had only been in the last two years, culminating in the resignation of President Nixon, that the public had fully realized "the enormous power that an investigative and adversary press can exert." He followed immediately with this passage:

> *Watergate has driven home to the public "the enormous power that an investigative and adversary press can exert." Should this power be limited?*

> "The public opinion polls that I have seen indicate that some Americans firmly believe that the former Vice President and former President of the United States were hounded out of office by an arrogant and irresponsible press that had outrageously usurped dictatorial power.
>
> "And it seems clear that many more Americans, while appreciating and even applauding the service performed by the press in exposing official wrongdoing at the highest levels of our national government, are nonetheless deeply disturbed by what they consider to be the illegitimate power of the organized press in the political structure of our society.
>
> "It is my thesis this morning that, on the contrary, the established American press in the past 10 years, and particularly in the past two years, has performed precisely the function it was intended to perform by those who wrote the First Amendment of our Constitution."

Justice Stewart finds that the special role of the press, as an adversary to the government, springs from the Bill of Rights, which for the most part protects the rights of individuals — freedom of speech, freedom of worship, the right to counsel. "In contrast," he says, "the Free Press Clause extends protection to an institution. The publishing business is, in short, the only organized private business that is given explicit constitutional protection."

Of what consequence is this institutional protection? According to Mr. Stewart it refutes the theory that "the only purpose of a constitutional guarantee of a free press is to insure that a newspaper will serve as a neutral forum for debate . . . a kind of Hyde Park Corner for the community . . . a neutral conduit of information between the people and their elected leaders" (shades of the Tornillo decision). "These theories," he maintains, "give insufficient weight to the institutional autonomy of the press that it was the purpose of the Constitution to guarantee."

In guaranteeing a free press, what the Founding Fathers had in mind was "to create a fourth institution outside the government as an additional check on the three official branches," says Mr. Stewart.

And he goes on: "For centuries before our Revolution, the press in England had been licensed, censored, and bedeviled by prosecutions for seditious libel. The British Crown knew that a free press meant organized, expert scrutiny of government. The press was a conspiracy of the intellect, with the courage of numbers. This formidable check on official power was what the British Crown had feared—and what the American Founders decided to risk."

Nearly 200 years later the press's "expert scrutiny of government" became an issue in the Pentagon Papers case. In 1971 the Justice Department asked the Supreme Court to restrain The New York Times and other newspapers from publishing those papers. The court refused to do so. Mr. Stewart commented on that decision:

> "The Pentagon Papers case involved the line between secrecy and openness in the affairs of government. The question, or at least one question, was whether that line is drawn by the Constitution itself. The Justice Department asked the court to find in the Constitution a basis for prohibiting the publication of allegedly stolen government documents. The court could find no such prohibition. So far as the Constitution goes, the autonomous press may publish what it knows, and may seek to learn what it can."

Autonomy Cuts Two Ways

But Mr. Stewart sees autonomy as cutting two ways: "The press is free to do battle against secrecy and deception in government. But the press cannot expect from the Consitution any guarantee that it will succeed. . . . The Constitution itself is neither a Freedom of Information Act nor an Official Secrets Act."

Continuing this line of reasoning, Mr. Stewart said:

> "The Constitution, in other words, establishes the contest, not its resolution. Congress may provide a resolution, at least in some instances, through carefully drawn legislation. For the rest, we must rely, as so often in our system we must, on the tug and pull of the political forces in American society.
>
> "Newspapers, television networks, and magazines have sometimes been outrageously abusive, untruthful, arrogant, and hypocritical. But it hardly follows that elimination of a strong and independent press is the way to eliminate abusiveness, untruth, arrogance, or hypocrisy from government itself."

Mr. Stewart leaves us with mixed feelings here. We admire his stout defense of an independent press; we are uneasy about an impression he may create. Some may hear him saying the Constitution grants the press a great privilege—the right to be unfair—and the press responds by feeling no obligation to be fair.

Mr. Stewart is not saying this, it seems to us, and it doesn't fit the facts. However, we would not claim there have never been occasions when individual newspapers, magazines or TV newscasts have been "abusive, untruthful, arrogant and hypocritical."

We would claim that most editors and reporters (and even a considerable number of publishers) do try very hard to be fair. We don't always succeed. Nevertheless, the U.S. press does serve as an open marketplace for ideas, a "Hyde Park Corner for the community."

Indeed, Mr. Stewart does suggest one pressure that pushes newspapers toward fairness: "If a newspaper wants to serve as a neutral marketplace for debate, that is an objective it is free to choose. And within limits, that choice is probably necessary to commercially successful journalism."

In conclusion Mr. Stewart speculated that the Republic might survive without an autonomous press. We could have had a Constitution that relegated the press "to the status of a public utility." Such a Constitution would be possible. And then he said:

> "But it is not the Constitution the Founders wrote. It is not the Constitution that has carried us through nearly two centuries of national life. Perhaps our liberties might survive without an independent established press. But the Founders doubted it, and, in the year 1974, I think we can all be thankful for their doubts."

Mr. Cony is Vice President and Executive Editor of Dow Jones & Co.

Should Editors Be Forced to Join a Union?

By Bowen Northrup

LONDON—The British press is agitated [illegible] what it considers a threat to its free-

[illegible] of London recently felt com- [illegible] readers that newspapers [illegible] commerce" [illegible]

"freedom" are prone to sadly biased editorial coverage when it comes [illegible] for a British election c[illegible]

For s[illegible] consi[illegible]

"The system is entirely voluntary," explains an official at the Press Council, an industry body. But an editor who publishes in defiance of a memorandum faces censure and possibly insinuations of unpatriotic behavior.

[illegible]e D-Notice system, notes the Pre[illegible] official, "is open to some politi[illegible] occasion." That is, the gov[illegible] day may find it conveni[illegible] to emb[illegible]

Outasight, outamind

Joan Hall

It is extraordinary how many things we don't talk about any more. There is Watergate, which everybody is tired of hearing about, and there is Vietnam, which everybody wants to pretend doesn't exist.

And Patricia Hearst. If anyone ever mentions Patricia Hearst these days it is only to ask, as one might ask about the good old days, "Whatever happened to Patricia Hearst?"

Whatever happened to the Symbionese Liberation Army? For that matter, whatever happened to black power, the new left and "the movement"? What was "the movement" anyhow?

Nobody ever talks about "the revolution" any more, or campus unrest, or the Beatles.

When is the last time anybody talked about "hippies"? About "fun city"?

Nobody says "uptight" any more, or "backlash," or "silent majority." Nobody talks about "the free world," "the struggle for men's minds," "the new politics," or Spiro Agnew.

It is as though Agnew had never existed, yet within the memory of recently born babes he was the rising glory of Republicanism. Now, in less than a year he has become an unperson.

So has John Connally. Anybody remember "Big John"? He was the post-Agnew rising glory of Republicanism, and now he has been consumed and forgotten after three minutes of fame.

Three minutes of fame may be all any man, any idea, or any event can expect nowadays. There was a war in Cyprus a few weeks ago and afterward a sort of revolution in Greece, and who remembers it any more?

Anything that is four minutes old is as ancient as Egypt. And speaking of Egypt, whatever happened to Libya?

We consume our history so fast to get on to the next tidbit that there is no time to digest it, and so become a people without memory.

Whatever happened to George McGovern? Who was Elliott Richardson? Where is little Tania's Leningrad diary?

To ask these questions is to be tiresome, to betray oneself as a lingerer in the past at a time when events are rushing ahead at breakneck speed. We like that cliché—events rushing at breakneck speed. It gives us the sense of living dynamically, which is a delusion because events are not rushing anywhere. We are merely consuming them at indigestible speed, perhaps so they will not get lodged in our memory and start to mean something to us.

Who was General Thieu? What was My Lai? Does anybody remember light at the end of the tunnel?

Nobody wants to hear about such things any more. We are blanking experience out of memory. There are weighty events bearing down upon us which must be dealt with at once. President Ford's swimming pool. Pollution-emission controls. The cold-water laundry crisis.

Who has heard lately of Elizabeth Taylor? What became of Rowan and Martin? Stokely Carmichael? Abby Hoffman and Jerry Rubin?

And who has talked lately about the most important book of the decade? None of us, probably, for none of us can remember its title, any more than we can remember who played in the game of the century not long ago.

It is not surprising that trivia is one of the few pastimes that has survived an entire decade, for it demands ability to remember facts without context, and facts without context are almost all that remain when you consume history with your brain off. Nowadays context is harder to find than 90-cent hamburger.

It is very much like flying across the country by jet. The country does not rush by underneath so rapidly that we cannot see it, sense it, digest it and emerge with the slightest sense of what an extraordinary and fascinating place it is; it is we who rush by overhead so fast that the journey becomes meaningless.

"We are coming up over the Grand Canyon on the left side of the plane now and will shortly be crossing the Mississippi River, folks." What was Pompidou? Which was Anthony Ulasewicz? Why was Charles Manson? Who was the second man on the moon?

It is a fast trip up here at 35,000 light years above context, but despite the speed you sometimes wonder if you are going any place at all. ■

The Washington Post STYLE Gardens / Book World SHOW

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 1976 G1

One Man's Queue Won't Fit Everyman to a T

Drawing by David Suter for the Washington Post

By Tom Donnelly

Once upon a time, roughly 35 or 40 years ago, it was possible and even reasonable to speak of "the mass audience" or "the general public" when referring to movies and radio and pop music. You could say that "everybody likes" Astaire and Rogers, or Jack Benny, or "Gone With the Wind" in glorious Technicolor, or Duke Ellington, and you wouldn't be likely to get much of an argument. The legitimate theater audience, a relatively small group, was partial to Katharine Cornell, Lunt and Fontanne, Ethel Merman and the plays of Maxwell Anderson.

Of course there were performers who had limited followings, and movies that critics loved and the mass audience didn't, and movies that bombed with everybody including the producer's mother. But roughly speaking, we all lived in the same world insofar as entertainment was concerned.

No more. Today we live in the era of the multiple audience. Which is to say there are dozens of audiences, for dozens of different kinds of film, theater, music and dance (television, of course, is something else again).

Some of these audiences don't overlap: the people who line up to see Ingrid Bergman in "The Constant Wife" are not likely to line up for Bruce Jay Friedman's "Steambath." The audience that finds "Steambath" entertaining may not hold still for an off off-Broadway number about a janitor who imagines he is a loaf of bread and slices himself to death.

There are people who manage to sample the best of what's available on stage, screen and in the concert hall, but in my experience these Renaissance types are few.

Some of the younger folks, basically movie-oriented, occasionally announce their intention of seeing some play or other that gives promise of being exceptional. They have a way of forgetting to get the tickets. More often than not they're glad they didn't get the tickets because the play has turned out to be a bomb. Most plays do, you may have noticed.

Most movies also bomb, but there's no denying that film has the prestige, interest, impact and importance once primarily associated with theater. The fans of Pauline Kael will find it hard to credit that in 1945, after ten months of reviewing films for The New Yorker, Wolcott Gibbs expressed himself as follows:

"It seems to me the cinema resists rational criticism almost as firmly as a six-day bicycle race, or perhaps love ... it is my indignant opinion that 90 per cent of the moving pictures exhibited in America are so vulgar, witless and dull that it is preposterous to write about them in any publication not intended to be read while chewing gum." For a topper, Gibbs said he had finally come to realize "the whole absurdity" of "trying to write for the information of my friends about something that was plainly designed for the entertainment of their cooks." Today many of those movies Gibbs thought fit only for cooks are being enjoyed in revival programs by some of the best people, most of them cookless, circumstances being what they are. And these days, when some Broadway comedy sensation is brought to the screen Kael will frequently announce that they've made a movie out of just the sort of rubbish people go to movies to get away from.

Consider the markedly varied reactions to the stage and screen versions of Barry England's "Conduct Unbecoming." The other day I heard a young film critic regaling his friends with his impressions of this drama about a threat to the honor of a regiment in the Indian Army in the late 1800s. He found the whole thing hilariously fusty and was positively convulsed by the bit about the assault on the heroine. She was — oh gross indignity! — stabbed in the buttocks by an officer who turned out to be no gentleman. The same drama of pukka sahib characters in turmoil that seems ludicrous to thoughtful cinemagoers was a hit on the London stage, was respectfully received on Broadway and is included as one of the ten toppers in "The Best Plays of 1970-1971."

I saw the play in New York, and the reactions of two very elderly theatergoers who sat directly behind me may be instructive. At the end of the first act the woman said she thought

See REVUE, G3, Col. 1

'Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman': No Soft Soap

SOAP, From G1

imes". Lear felt this would ruin the now and turned down the CBS offer. ABC and NBC turned it down for other reasons.

The next logical step for Lear would have been to go to the syndicators, but he was tired of dealing with middlemen. Instead, he invited and brought to Hollywood last August, 23 presidents, owners and station managers of independent and multi-owned television groups who represented more than 100 television stations. He wined them, dined them and showed them the first two episodes. The result — 87 stations bought the show by the end of the year. Lear expects the total to be at least 100 when it airs this week. Many of them are network affiliates who have taken the unusual step of clearing five half-hour time slots a week for an unproven product.

Lear is not the first producer to make an end run around the networks. After they turned down England's ATV series "Space: 1999," its chief, Sir Lew Grade went the syndication route, peddling it eventually to 146 stations in this country, many of them network affiliates. Twenty-four episodes are being run this season. Production is about to resume on another 24 for next season.

Grade is powerful enough and rich enough to go his own way if the networks turn him down. Lear is not nearly so rich, but he is successful and independent enough to make his own kind of end run, by passing syndication and selling directly to individual stations. He is also innovative enough to come up with an idea such as "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," which may catch on with an audience that is increasingly demanding a higher level of sophistication and intelligence in its television entertainment.

Even if Lear fails in this outing, he and others will be back with other ideas not deemed acceptable by the three networks. In time, creative people like him may convince an increasing number of station owners that they need not depend exclusively on the networks for their products. The networks are already screaming bloody murder about competition from cable television. If "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" succeeds, they will really have reason for concern. The viewers will have reason for celebration.

A Time When One Man's Queue Won't Fit Everyman to a T

REVUE, From G1

the piece was rather enjoyable. The man was struck by a horrible thought. He said, "You don't suppose this is going to turn out to be one of those Theater of the Absurd things? Where nothing is what it seems and it's all taking place in the city dump or someplace?"

The woman said, "Oh good heavens, I hope not! You don't really think ...?" After some debate, they decided they were really seeing what they thought they were seeing. They were much relieved.

The Broadway theater has been booming for the past couple of years, largely on the basis of revivals, musicals, English imports and an occasional American comedy smash like "Same Time, Next Year."

Now and again an "Equus" (also imported) will succeed, but by and large the "serious drama" is not for the Broadway public. Everybody says so, especially the producers. A press agent for the long-running English comedy "Absurd Person Singular" wondered about the composition of the Broadway audience and polled the customers in half a dozen theaters. Younger playgoers were in a definite minority, and the older folks, asked which critics influenced them most, gave first place to Brooks Atkinson, who retired some years ago, and second place to Judith Crist, who writes on movies. The press agent could make nothing of these results although he tended to feel the answers indicated a prevailing sleepyhead condition.

Joseph Papp is an impresario who seems to reach out in all sorts of audiences. With "A Chorus Line," now triumphantly moved from off-Broadway to Broadway, he is managing to please just about everybody. But he has had to cancel his much-heralded season of brand new plays on Broadway. Of five announced works only one made it to opening night, Dennis Reardon's "The Leaf People." It was all about the destruction of a primitive tribe by the ruthless march of civilization. Jack Kroll of Newsweek said it was "just the kind of new American work Broadway audiences should be confronted with."

Papp, who not so long ago was thrilling what appeared to be a special public

"Country music we have always had with us, or so it would seem, but students of the Nashville scene and sound say the country music explosion occured about five years ago. It was then that a lot of city folk stopped ridiculing country music as fit only for rubes."

of his own with things like "Sticks and Bones," came to grief when he took charge at the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center and "confronted" the customers with works like Anne Burr's "Mert & Phil," a ghastly comedy about a couple of semi-comotose slobs and their friends. The heroine, recovering from a mastectomy, sometimes relieved her inner tensions by whacking her senile old mother with a mallet. The Vivian Beaumont clientele said "No" to this sort of evening in the theater and Papp announced that he was switching to the classics, with "name" actors whenever available.

Still, some of the critics thought "Mert & Phil" contained a corruscating commentary on American life and in some Village loft or basement I've no doubt it would have found its audience. After all there are audiences, not sizable but appreciative, for the Theater of Cruelty, the Theater of the Ridiculous (according to Walter Kerr "a chap in bloody shorts who might or might not have been castrated eventually acquired a pair of papier-mache breasts"), the Theater of Fact (dull documentaries like "In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer") and the Ontological Hysteric Theater which is currently offering something titled "Rhoda in Potatoland," a work one reviewer describes as "multi-layered, realized with a very sure and perverse taste."

The total audience the most popular play can attract is, as we are frequently reminded, not remotely comparable in size to the audience that turns out for a hit movie. But whereas three or four decades ago almost any movie played to an audience of millions and the major studios could count on a certain number of bookings for even their most calamitous offerings, today's filmgoers "shop around." In the good old days "everybody" went to Hope and Crosby movies and Powell and Loy movies. Today there's an Ingmar Bergman audience, a "Billy Jack" and "Walking Tall" audience, a Disney audience, a "Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry" audience, a "Forgotten Wilderness" audience, a "Behind Green Doors" audience, a "Black Dragon vs. Yellow Tiger" audience, a "Cleopatra Jones" audience, and innumerable others. There's a certain amount of "crossing over," but by and large the Ingmar Bergman fans don't go to "Billy Jack" pictures and "Billy Jack" fans stay away from the likes of "Cries and Whispers."

Every year a few films rack up grosses seldom, if ever, achieved by M-G-M extravaganzas when that studio was at its height. The situation at the moment is one of dizzy contrasts. The phenomenal "Jaws" is attracting the largest audience in film history: Variety says the movie will probably be the first to take in $200 million or more in world-wide rentals. At the same time dozens of films produced in the past few years have had to be written off as total losses; for them there is, apparently, no audience at all.

All I know about rock music you could engrave on the underside of a

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very small pebble. But I gather from the correspondents in the field that here again there are audiences within audiences and the situation is at all times highly volatile. A recent (Oct. 27) Newsweek cover story reported that Bruce Springsteen is a superstar and the darling of rock critics even though he is not a household name across America. Springsteen's 13-year-old sister says, "Only one girl at school has his record." Newsweek says, "Springsteen's own insistence on performing in small halls and clubs has created a kind of cult hysteria." Springsteen has already been compared to Elvis, Dylan and Mick Jagger, and he has been so tirelessly promoted by his record company, Columbia, that a lot of people think he could be hurt by The Hype. Including Springsteen. "The Hype just gets in the way," he says. "People have gone nuts. It's weird." The question, according to Newsweek, is: "Will Bruce Springsteen be able to reach the masses?" The answer, Newsweek suggests, is Yes.

Well, why shouldn't a singer whose third album ("Born to Run") "rocketed to a million-dollar gold album in six weeks" make good? That is, good, like Elvis and Dylan and Mick ....

Country music we have always had with us, or so it would seem, but students of the Nashville scene and sound say the country music explosion occurred about five years ago. It was then that a lot of city folk stopped ridiculing country music as fit only for rubes. That still leaves us with at least two big audiences, the one that thrills to Tammy Wynette ("My door to love has opened out more times than in") and the one that simply will not hear of her.

"Why can't America love New York City's pop favorites?" the New York Times inquired a few months ago, citing the failure of Lou Reed, The New York Dolls, The Manhattan Transfer, Elliott Murphy and Bette Midler to set the nation on fire. The author of the piece decided that these performers "share a fatal attraction to a camp, ironic theatricality" that wows a New York audience but just doesn't travel well.

New York is having what one critic describes as its "greatest dance season ever," what with powerhouse ballets, major modern companies like the Ailey, Graham, Nikolais and Taylor and innumerable smaller companies offering "chamber-ballet intimacy," "futuristic satires" and "acrobatic doodles." Another case of multiple audiences. "The dance audience, admittedly a growing one, is always being represented as wildly eclectic," says Arlene Croce in The

"New York is having what one critic describes as its 'greatest dance season ever,' what with powerhouse ballets, major modern companies like the Ailey, Graham, Nikolais and Taylor, and innumerable smaller companies offering 'chamber-ballet intimacy,' 'futuristic satires' and 'acrobatic doodles.'"

New Yorker, "when in fact it is divided into as many sects as 19th-century American Protestantism. Only the critics go to everything."

The same goes for classical music. You don't see many of people who pack the Kennedy Center for Dorati and Beethoven going to a Smithsonian electronic synthesizer concert.

Television? Yes, even there. One could easily get the impression that just about everyone in the country tuned in on "The Forsyte Saga" and "Upstairs, Downstairs." But that was no multitude, that was just the PBS audience, exercising its right to be a discriminating minority.

THE WALL STREET JOURN

Politics *and* People

By Alan L. Otten

Who's a Reporter?

As though the press didn't have enough headaches, along comes a tough new one: accreditation.

There's been plenty of publicity about most current problems of newspapers, magazines and broadcasters: government attacks via speeches, subpoenas and other devices; official secrecy and deception; court rulings on what the press can't carry and on what it must carry; the press' own low credibility.

Accreditation — deciding who should have credentials to work as a reporter—probably isn't quite so significant, but it's still an important matter. Credentials are often essential to a reporter's being able to do his job—to use convenient press facilities, to cover official press conferences or hearings, to pass through police lines, to prove his identity to potential news sources. And it's a tricky matter, too, because it poses such difficult questions as just who is to be considered a bona fide reporter, just who should make this decision, and what, if any, conditions should be attached to the credentials.

Several recent cases have been gathered by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, a newsmen's group that carries on research and offers legal help on press-freedom issues.

It notes, for example, that Robert Sherrill of The Nation magazine and Thomas Forcade of the Underground Press Syndicate are suing to force the White House to give them credentials. Each has been repeatedly denied White House press cards and access to press conferences and other presidential appearances, on grounds that he "is deemed to be a potential threat to the physical security of the President and/or his immediate family."

The Secret Service hasn't spelled this out too specifically, but has alluded to the fact that Mr. Sherrill was once arrested and fined for assaulting a Florida state legislator, and that Mr. Forcade threw a pie at a staff aide during a hearing of the President's Pornography Commission. (The reporters' lawyer says the charges against Mr. Sherrill were later dismissed because it wasn't clear just who had started the fight, and that the Forcade pie-throwing was intended as a joke and that no charges were ever brought against him.)

* * *

A different kind of dispute has stemmed from a recent ruling by the Standing Committee of Correspondents, which administers the U.S. Senate and House newspaper galleries, to deny credentials to any reporter who accepts money for appearing on radio or TV programs "sponsored by the federal government."

A few Senators and Congressmen who make radio or TV programs to send to stations back home have occasionally been paying friendly reporters to ask questions these programs; the Standing Com five reporters elected by the Wa press corps, wanted to outlaw this Eventually, however, it decided to more broadly, and to bit all paid on any government programs, including the panel shows produced by the Voice of America for overseas use.

Argues committee member Leo Rennert, correspondent for the McClatchy Newspapers of California: "If the press is going to hold government officials and politicians to high ethical standards, it must have high standards of its own."

At least a few correspondents have strongly protested that this ruling, particularly as applied to VOA, infringes their personal and professional rights. "The thing is silly," insists Richard L. Strout, veteran reporter for The Christian Science Monitor and an occasional VOA panelist. "Why should any group of newspapermen be able to tell the rest of us whom we can sell our services to? That should be strictly up to me, or to me and my employer."

The Executive Committee of the Periodical Press Galleries, which controls the congressional facilities used by magazine writers, has lost two recent disputes. In one, it refused credentials to a subscription-supported housing newsletter, because gallery rules permitted only publications "supported chiefly by advertising." The editor threatened to sue, and the committee agreed to permit subscriber-supported periodicals as well.

* * *

A second action, of wider impact, denied credentials to the Washington editor of Consumer Reports magazine, on the ground that its ownership by Consumers Union ran it afoul of a rule that all accredited publications be "owned and operated independently of any industry, business, association, or institution." The committee argued that Consumers Union was primarily an "advocacy group," and not a publisher.

The editor went to court, and last October, won a sweeping verdict from U.S. District Judge Gerhard Gesell. Courts must protect "the equal access of newsmen to facts of pub

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The editor went to court, and last October, won a sweeping verdict from U.S. District Judge Gerhard Gesell. Courts must protect "the equal access of newsmen to facts of public consequence," Judge Gesell ruled. He added that press freedom "is undermined if the access of certain reporters to facts relating to the public's business is limited merely because they advocate a particular viewpoint."

The accreditation issue is by no means confined to Washington. A three-judge federal court recently struck down an Alabama law requiring detailed financial reports from all statehouse correspondents. There have been repeated disputes over credentials for important trials. A recent Chicago Journalism Review article protests how hard it is for freelance reporters to get press credentials from the Chicago Police Department.

Several factors probably account for the prominence of the accreditation issue right now. One clear cause is the growing number and influence of underground papers, aggressively hostile to authority but still desiring official credentials. College papers and publications of minority and public interest groups are also demanding fuller access to news sources and events.

The current general bitterness between press and officials is bound to spill over into disputes about credentials. And, as the VOA controversy shows, recent disclosures of wrongdoing in high places are impelling both government and press accrediting groups to study the need for tighter ethical guidelines.

Uncharacteristically, and undoubtedly reflecting a split within its ranks, the Reporters Committee is straddling the issue. Its latest newsletter merely notes, with conspicuous understatement, that the issue raises "all kinds of awkward questions for the establishment press which controls press galleries, for the legislative and executive branches which have a symbiotic relationship with the major media, and for the Constitution."

Television

TV VIEW

JOHN J. O'CONNOR

TV Criticism—Is It All a Dream?

For a television critic to spend one week of a month's vacation at a seminar on TV criticism, the circumstances, understandably, would have to be compelling. Simply knowing that the seminar was to be held in the glorious setting of Aspen, Colo., proved compelling enough for this writer. But the jaunt, made several weeks ago, turned out to be considerably less scenic than anticipated. As sessions on the significance, cosmic or otherwise, of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" followed sessions on the analysis of TV as collective dreams, the grandeur of Aspen faded into a dimly perceived background for humming TV monitors and anxious declarations on the significance of it all.

The conference was arranged by the Aspen Institute Program on Communications and Society. With Douglass Cater as director, the program has established a Workshop for Television, which accepts the reasonable premise that, given television's role as dominant and mammoth medium of communications, serious attention must be given to TV's impact and potential. Coordinated by Richard Adler, the workshop is attempting to bring new voices into TV criticism. Papers written for a 1974 conference have now been published in a valuable volume called "Television as a Social Force" (Praeger, $3.95 paper, $15 cloth). The writers include Michael Novak, Benjamin DeMott, David Littlejohn, Paul Weaver and Michael Robinson.

One implication, of course, is that TV is too important to be left to the daily reviewers, and persuasive argument can be marshalled behind that assertion. But the belated recognition of TV by more "serious" or "thinking" minds, while encouraging, carries its own potential dangers. Witness, for parallel example, the discovery by academe of the "art of film," an important development that has disintegrated into such blatant absurdities as accredited college courses on the history of the monster movie.

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The basic problem is hardly new: How does the mind that considers itself serious deal with popular culture, which generally does not consider itself serious, except perhaps at the soiled "bottom line" of success and profit? The justifications can be fascinating. Recently, John Simon, now a film critic for New York magazine, confessed to his readers that "movies are potentially a great time waster. . . . Quality, to masses of viewers and a good many reviewers, hardly matters." Mr. Simon explained that he loved only "good films," the work of Antonioni or Bergman or Fellini or Bresson or Kurosawa "at their best." Absolutely, but that still leaves the film critic precious little quality to savor in any given year of film.

Of course, Mr. Simon can, and does, comfort himself with the fact that movies can still, on the whole, provide more quality than television, which has "boomed into vulgar supremacy." But that fact is hardly permanent and is even less unassailable than it was five years ago. One of the best "films" by far that I have seen this past year is Bergman's "Scenes from a Marriage," which was made for Swedish television. Watching film critics juggle that awkward fact has been singularly absorbing.

Heading in the right direction, the Aspen conference was not able to avoid unproductive detours, most notably on an "appreciation" of a sit-com series. Employing the obvious in pursuit of the sophomoric can be hazardous to an individual's attention span. But several of the formal presentations were undeniably worthwhile or, at the very least, bracingly provocative. The theoretical, represented largely by academics (Peter Wood, historian, Duke University; Paula Fass, historian, University of California; Sharon Sperry, media specialist, University of Indiana), was afforded a productive confrontation with the practical (Al Burton, director of Norman Lear's TAT Communications; Al Perlmutter, NBC News vice president; David Webster, director of U.S. operations for the British Broadcasting Corporation).

Much of the material presented demands further research, but some of the theories command immediate attention. Peter Wood's interpretation of television as dream is sketchy but seductive, noting, among other things, that dreams and TV share highly visual contents marked by a combination of symbolic richness and forgettability. In a related area, researchers are discovering that the brain-wave patterns of TV watchers are remarkably similar to those of sleepers. (Of course, the same may be true of movie watchers or stage-production watchers.)

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Beyond the presentations, the conference generated a pronounced strain of what might be labeled cultural conservatism, detected most strongly in a tendency to question liberal clichés. The most notable, and most effective, spokesman for this contingent is Michael Novak. One Novak essay, observing that it is common for a great many of the personnel connected with television to imagine themselves as anti-establishment or even iconoclastic, points out that "surely they must know that to men who work in breweries or sheet metal plants, to women who clean tables in cafeterias or splice wires in electronic assembly plants, they must seem to be at the very height of the Establishment. Their criticisms of American society are perceived to be something like the complaints of spoiled children. There seems to be a self-hatred in the medium, a certain shame about American society.

Grappling and groping, the Aspen conference was not without its curious aspects. At last discovering the virtues of TV, most participants seemed content to restrict their appreciation to "All in the Family" or "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." But that is too easy. These are two of the best series on television. Little effort was made to deal with the transparently mediocre, things like "Karen" or, from the "adventure" genre, another largely ignored area, "Police Woman." On the other hand, no effort was made to indicate that TV could be considerably more than "All in the Family." The TV special, public-TV programming and "Scenes from a Marriage" were snubbed, apparently with calculation. The new devotees of the tube tend to get nervous on the subject of serious art.

Meanwhile, the daily reviewer is forced to continue plugging away at providing a consumer service, telling readers what may or may not be worth watching that particular day. In the end, selectivity may be the only salvation in confronting the giant machine. It is questionable how important an interpretation of dreams may be in reviewing a series like "Big Eddie," for one example. But it can't hurt. ■

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Business 'Leadership'

As the recession deepens, no doubt we will see the leaders of American business lined up in Washington to trade birthrights for pottage.

The spectacle flashed before our eyes the other day upon hearing Henry Ford II, no less, propose "serious consideration" for something-like the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to make government investments in beleaguered businesses. The same idea has also been elaborated and approved—"desirable without any doubt"—by Felix G. Rohatyn of Lazard Freres, writing in The New York Times. So big business leaders and big names on Wall Street are lining up with the Democratic mini-convention, which has also, and more understandably, endorsed the same idea.

The first thing that needs to be said is that the whole notion is sillier than a WIN button. From where will the government get the capital to make such loans and equity investments? Why, by running bigger deficits. And where does government get the money to cover deficits? Why, by issuing bonds. And why don't businesses get the capital directly by issuing their own bonds? Why, because in 1973 bonds issued by the federal government and federally sponsored agencies lapped up 62% of all monies in the bond market.

So now, we're told, we need a new RFC to have the government borrow even more money so that it can loan money to corporations that can't borrow money because the government borrowings have taken it all. In fairness to Mr. Rohatyn, under his proposal this would happen only initially. After that, the government investments to give more capital to business would be financed by higher taxes on business.

The second thing that must be said is that any such proposal would spell the further advance of government and further decline of business, as the percentage of the bond market suggests. Even if the board were composed of Socrates, Abraham, St. Paul and Confucius, it could not direct capital investments to efficient uses anywhere nearly as well as do the multiple decisions of a working market. And as universities are now the first to admit, federal aid does not come without strings.

A third thing, and ultimately a more important one, also needs examining. How can any businessman support any such thing? Perhaps one could excuse executives of Lockheed or Pan Am for grasping at straws when the very survival of their enterprise is under question. But obviously the phenomenon extends well beyond that.

For that matter, the leaders of American business found themselves supporting wage and price controls the last time around, as they definitely do not like to be reminded. The principal reason, aside from a tendency to "go along," was that the proposal came at a moment when wage pressures were building and price pressures were abating; thus businessmen thought controls would give them some short-run benefits.

Similarly, businessmen can now see some short-run advantages in having the government take over some of the burden of a capital accumulation task that is currently so difficult. The long-range implications are seldom weighed. As politicians' eyes are focused on the next election, the eyes of the typical businessman are focused on the next quarter's earnings report. Yet business wonders why it is not more highly regarded.

The greatest irony is that the present short-run needs of business are anything but inconsistent with its long-run interests. Businesses and therefore society need more capital, especially, as Mr. Rohatyn stresses, more equity capital. In both the short run and the long run, they need less interference from Washington. There is one proposal that will serve all of these purposes, and if business leaders have to line up in Washington for anything, they ought to line up to ask for lower corporate taxes. Apparently the tax-cutting talk among auto executives, union leaders and President Ford yesterday centered on cuts for consumers and perhaps higher investment credits. We would have hoped a brave executive would have asked forthrightly for a lower corporate rate.

This is a perfectly sensible proposal, and would have come naturally to an earlier generation of capitalists. To the extent corporate taxes are passed along to consumers, lowering them is directly anti-inflationary. To the extent they are not passed along to consumers, they go into capital accumulation, either directly in the form of retained earnings or indirectly in the form of dividend payments to attract equity investment. Understanding this, Canada's government has already trimmed its corporate tax rate to 40% from 49%, to the apparent benefit of its entire economy.

Leading American capitalists, by contrast with the Socialists running Canada, propose instead to attack the problem of capital accumulation by routing more money through Washington. Apparently our nation has raised a generation of business leaders who are afraid to defend their own interests even when it is the right thing to do.

President Ford's Reassurance

Meeting a Sp… Breed of Russ…

By ROBERT KEATLE…

The temperature was eight… falling when the U.S. press cor… near Vladivostok last month to… ident Ford's short summit in t… But all was not coldness. There… with smiles were a couple do… rized Russians, transported 6… from Moscow to make us feel wel…

With detente so much in fas… Authorized Russians are becomin… lar indeed. They are a mixed bag … nalists, propagandists and acaden… who specialize in American affai… summit time, or Kissinger-visit time… diligently work the visiting Am… press corps to mine Washington … about people and policies which in… them ("Does Ford drink a lot?" one… me hopefully).

They are among the relatively fe… viet citizens allowed, or assigned, or … rized to hold political conversations… visitors. They are often pleasant, … times informed and occasionally eve… formative about official Soviet thinki… assorted subjects. And what they… from us helps their writing and res… on contemporary America, their o… prime interest.

In addition, of course, it's assume… most are employed by—or reporting t… KGB, that omnipresent Soviet bureau… which combines internal security wi… ternal intelligence and plays a majo… in governing the country.

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Some Authorized Russians zero… particular journalists whom they've… vated through past summits and Wa… ton assignments. A couple of eminen… columnists, for example, deal exclu… with a man they've dubbed the … "Colonel" because of his extensive e… ence and knowledge. At Vladivostok… promoted him briefly to "General"… cause he passed along insights alle… from the very top. Whether they cut… back to Captain later isn't clear; his … proved dead wrong.

Because of four visits to China, I'm … sumed by these Russians to know wh… up in that country (as if any outsider … know). Therefore I drew a "journalist"… slightly furtive manner who specialize… China, though he remains rather va… about his nominal press affiliation. Spe… ing softly from the side of his mouth, he… quired after the health of Chairman M… Premier Chou and the Chinese body p… tic. He then switched to domestic matte… Will Mr. Ford show leadership on U.S. e… nomic problems? Another good question… agreed, for which there was no good a… swer.

So it went during the cold, two-hour b… ride from the airport to Priamurje Sanat… rium, where for only $286 apiece, the So… ets gave us a night's lodging—disprovi… the claim, incidentally, that there's … profit in detente.

And there we found a surp… Authorized Russians. By sheer coin… dence, it was claimed with straight fac… the U.S.A. Institute of Moscow (t… U.S.S.R.'s leading analyzer of Americ… affairs) was holding a symposium in … very same sanitorium which housed… shame we weren't there a da… members said with …

... from NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, Sunday, 16 June 1974, pp. 7ff.

media exploit celebrities exploit media exploit celebrities exploit

By Robert Brustein

A powerful phenomenon has begun to shape the cultural and political events of our time. Let us, for want of a better term, call it "news theater." By news theater, I don't mean documentary plays or theater of fact or living newspapers, but rather any histrionic proceeding that results from a collaboration between newsworthy personalities, a vast public, and the visual or print media (television, films, book publishing, magazines and newspapers).

News theater, in other words, is any event that confuses news with theater and theater with news. When Norman Mailer sells tickets to a crowd of prominent people for his 50th birthday party, promising an announcement of world importance, and then tells the assembled guests that he is forming a counterintelligence agency to keep tabs on the F.B.I. and the C.I.A., *that* is news theater, because it represents the mutual exploitation of the media by Mailer and Mailer by the media for theatrical purposes.

It is news theater when a California family agrees to expose before television cameras the most intimate secrets of its family life, including marital strife and divorce and the homosexual inclinations of one of the children. It is news theater when the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnaps the daughter of a newspaper magnate and then designs its every move to capture and dominate the media, whether through publicity for a food distribution program, or its demand to have two imprisoned members appear on television, or its choice of a bank with automatic cameras so that a robbery can be photographically recorded (the apocalyptic demise of six members of the S.L.A. in a flaming Los Angeles house, as seen on television, is also a form of news theater).

It is news theater when Arab guerrillas are able to command the attention of the world's media by assassinating 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team or by blowing up a hijacked airliner or by gunning down innocent children in a Maalot schoolhouse. And it is news theater when President Nixon takes on the road a show called Operation Candor (being a turkey, it closed out of town some months ago), laboring to convince American audiences of his "credibility" after the Watergate disclosures, despite the tremor in his hands and the moisture drenching his upper lip. Indeed, the very idea of "credibility" may be only another convention of news theater. It is certainly a concept more appropriate to the art of acting than to the craft of government, since it has less to do with verifying facts or discovering truth than with simulating a role of sincerity before the people.

Obviously, in describing the phenomenon of news theater, I am not announcing anything original or startling: I suspect Daniel Boorstin was talking about the same thing in his book "The Image," when he formulated his concept of the "pseudo event." On the other hand, I hope I may be able to examine the idea from a somewhat different perspective, given my theatrical background, and given what is proving to be a somewhat obsessive interest in the moral price exacted by fame in this country. Nor can I pretend to speak as a detached observer: I am myself a participant in news theater, and possibly another one of its victims. Anybody engaged in public activities tends to become an actor of a sort; merely to speak before an audience is to become something of a histrionic figure, self-consciously involved with posture, gesture, delivery.

Beyond this, however, public figures in our time tend to be pressured by their very notoriety into becoming actors. It is only one step from the television newsroom, for example—where commentators are usually chosen more on the basis of such theatrical qualities as their *(Continued on Page 36)*

At top, some actors in news theater: Norman Mailer, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Daniel Berrigan, Howard Cosell, Joseph Papp and Martha Mitchell.

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News theater

Continued from Page 7

looks and voices than on their capacity to analyze the news —to the movies or the stage. Consider the career of Jim Bouton, who went from the playing fields to the newsroom of CBS to a featured role in Robert Altman's movie "The Long Goodbye." Or consider Howard Cosell sports announcer for ABC, who appeared in Woody Allen's "Bananas," and is now preparing to run for political office (former Mayor of Cleveland Carl Stokes took the opposite route, going from politics to the newsroom of NBC).

Consider, too, the CBS theater reviewer, Leonard Harris, who recently played the reporter in "Born Yesterday" at the Manhattan Theater Club. Or consider more personal examples in the prospect of two heads of Eastern drama schools appearing as actors on the public stage: John Houseman of Juilliard has won a well-deserved Academy Award for his role in "The Paper Chase," and I myself completed a run some months ago, playing President Nixon in the Yale Repertory Theater production of "Watergate Classics."

I trust that all of us will be forgiven for extending our functions into theatrical performance; such lapses from official duties are harmless, and also rather relaxing. I mention them only to lend weight to my point that once you have become a public man in media America you have, willy-nilly, joined that great coast-to-coast repertory company that constitutes the only national theater we have. As Jimmy Durante used to complain, everybody's getting into the act; but oddly enough it's only in recent years that cultural personalities have assumed enough interest for the world at large to qualify as actors in news theater.

If I am worried by the more extreme manifestations of this development, it is because of its potentially malign effect on the moral direction of an artist's life, to say nothing of the corruption of his privacy. It is certain that the media now possess the power to create, perpetuate and destroy the reputations of gifted people in this country, through excessive exposure or excessive neglect—for although an individual may qualify as an actor in news theater through some genuine personal achievement, the length of his run is determined exclusively by the media, either with or without the connivance of the public.

Before I say why I find this lamentable, however, it might be wise to talk a little about the origins of the form and about some of its ramifications, and to reflect, too, on why this age has become so histrionic. Apparently in response to an insatiable public hunger for human symbols and icons, we tend to personify everything in America these days, from commercial products such as Captain Crunch cereal and Jolly Green Giant peas to political parties, cultural institutions and collaborative works of art. We attempt to put human faces even on faceless entities, perhaps out of nostalgia for mythical figures who might replace our lost gods and ceremonial persons. And just as primitive people endowed their leaders and shamans with curative powers, and subjects of royalty were convinced their kings had the power to cure through touch, so Americans still long to believe, in an age without magic, that certain specially endowed individuals can heal our disorders, realize our dreams, and solve our problems through the intervention of their powerful, magnetic personalities.

In a democratic society, this means that all Americans have potentially available to them the kind of fame previously reserved only for royalty—or, to speak in terms of our own royalty, the kind of notoriety once enjoyed only by movie stars. This unprecedented opportunity for celebrity inevitably creates an unprecedented *desire* for celebrity—especially now that social mobility has become relatively restricted through its traditional avenues of business and politics, and therefore open primarily through avenues of culture or publicity.

> Increasingly in America violent public acts are being committed for the sake of achieving immediate celebrity.

As a result of this development, the quest for fame has recently begun to outstrip the desire for money or power as the central animating motive of American life; and fame, we should note, has the most theatrical consequences of the three. One can be wealthy and obscure; one can even be powerful and still play a backstage role; but to be famous is, by definition, to be a role-playing animal, to abandon the private self for the public mask.

Add to this the overwhelming desire displayed by contemporary Americans to establish a sense of personal identity in a mass society. The need to escape obscurity, to validate existence, is becoming almost a national obsession in our crowded time, leading to gratuitous acts that seem to have no greater purpose than to attract the attention of the media. A relatively harmless example of this is the impulse to scrawl graffiti over the walls of New York subways, most of them signed with a code name, in a simultaneous bid for credit and anonymity.

A more sinister instance is the kind of violent public act increasingly being committed in America for the sake of achieving immediate celebrity. The frequency of assassination attempts in America since the invention of television must surely have theatrical as well as ideological causes: Think of Arthur Bremer's smiling face after his attempt on the life of George Wallace, delighted at having caught the attention of the camera, a more malign version of all those ordinary people who wave frantically at the TV cameras as they pan past their faces in a street or a studio.

What I am trying to suggest is that news theater threatens to make of all the world a stage, and players out of all the men and women. In so doing, it removes our attention from the deed to the actor of the deed, making us concentrate on a personality or a temperament rather than an issue or an action. Of course, the actor would not have much significance were it not for some significant initial action, but after the attention-getting moment is past, the rest is usually pure theater. Now, in saying this, I do not wish to denigrate the importance of theater, or its value as entertainment; I could hardly do this, given my own function as one who helps to create theater, as one who occasionally criticizes it, and as one who enjoys watching it, wherever it appears. No, my concern is rather for the unfortunate actor, since he almost invariably loses the meaning of his original unrehearsed act in a performance that often lacks sincerity and, worse, that sometimes casts unnecessary doubts upon the validity of his original deed.

Take, as an example, the case of Daniel Berrigan, who first came to public notice after a heroic act of resistance to the Vietnam war—the burning of draft records at Catonsville, for which he was later imprisoned in Danbury jail. Berrigan's difficult action, committed in public along with eight other war resisters, did much to dramatize the lengths to which people of conscience were willing to go in order to express their moral objections to the war. But it was not long before this priest and poet, the passionate, altruistic man who burned the draft records, was being swallowed up inside a self-conscious, self-exonerating, slightly self-intoxicated actor, encouraged by the media to pronounce upon a variety of political subjects in a rhetoric swollen with accents of divine inspiration.

Furthermore, Berrigan soon felt impelled to transfer his theatrical impulses to the actual stage in the form of a quasi documentary, considerably overpraised at the time, called "The Trial of the Catonsville Nine." Here he tried to justify his initial act of civil disobedience not only as a moral necessity but as a legal principle, satirizing the presiding judge who had evaluated the case according to judicial rules as some kind of flaccid liberal ninny who lacked the courage to acquit everybody purely on the basis of their moral beauty. In taking this tack, Father Berrigan actually managed to drain some of the real beauty from his act, since civil disobedience tends to lose its stature when promulgated as an action without a consequence.

I couldn't help thinking at the time of another work about the difficulty of discriminating between the dictates of morality and the law — Herman Melville's "Billy Budd" — in which a similar judge, required to adjudicate a crime committed out of virtuous motives, was nevertheless forced to convict a man he recognized as a saint in order to preserve the painful imperatives of the legal system. Instead of being scorned, this judge was blessed by his victim at the moment of his execution—blessed because Billy Budd understood the conflict between the laws of God and the laws of man, and sensed the anguish Captain Vere was suffering in trying to reconcile them. But this, I think, suggests the difference between true saints and those created by news theater, just as it demonstrates the difference between complex works of art formulated by real artists and acts of self-justification engineered by one of the interested parties.

I hope it is clear that I have great respect for the original sacrifice of Father Berrigan. If I emphasize the histrionic aspect of Berrigan's later development, it is in order to illustrate how, by theatricalizing such things, news theater helps to rob them of their significance, to lower their value through its stimulation of the theatrical. A vivid demonstration of this could be seen in the closing moments of Berrigan's play,

which consisted of a three-minute film clip taken at the actual burning of the records and the arrest of the people involved. The resisters stand solemnly and ceremoniously around the fire; the police vans arrive to take them off to the station house. Berrigan walks briskly to the van accompanied by a police officer and, just before he steps in, turns fully around to look for the camera. This very human moment of vanity, captured on film, was perhaps more telling in its way than all the posturing, declamation and rhetoric of the play.

In the political sphere, one could name many more examples of good people contorted into artificial attitudes by the presence and pressure of the media: Daniel Ellsberg, who has seemed, after his decision to publish the Pentagon Papers, to be conducting one long, continuous interview, fixed in a heroic frieze which includes the perpetual upturned smile of his admiring wife; Sam Ervin, brought to worldwide attention through his role in the Watergate hearings, now cast eternally as a homiletic rustic philosopher, complete with bouncing eyebrows, gnarled hands and best-selling records and books of proverbialisms; Martha Mitchell, converting what might be genuine pain and embarrassment over the precipitous turn in her family fortunes into a mode of performance through well-planned telephone calls and television appearances.

Even foreign figures often find themselves entrapped inside the network of American news theater. Think of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the very embodiment in Western eyes of resistance against censorship and oppression until the moment when, exiled from the Soviet Union, he overexposed himself in public with a series of questionable pronunciamentos and then disappeared behind a virtual curtain of media silence, to the dismay of all those who had been depending on him to publicize their own plight. One hardly knows whom to blame in cases like this—the media, whose fickleness concerning personalities keeps them prominent only as long as they are newsworthy, or the personalities themselves, provoked by the fear of losing attention into ever bolder and more theatrical actions.

The Louds: "It is news theater when a California family agrees to expose on TV its most intimate secrets."

Much of this is inevitable in an age when the domination of television and the newspapers has turned the world into a vast global theater, when a huge audience of millions is continually gorging on the entertainment value of news. Those who have had an opportunity to watch Jack Ruby kill Lee Harvey Oswald on camera, or Mark Essex shooting down policemen and passersby from the roof of a New Orleans Howard Johnson's before being gunned down himself, have been conditioned to expect moments of high drama with which to fill their leisure hours. (Isn't the relatively harmless fashion of "streaking" an effort to introduce media sensationalism into the routine of everyday events?)

Somebody has to appear on the covers of Time and Newsweek every seven days, somebody has to be interviewed nightly by Johnny Carson, or Merv Griffin, or Dick Cavett, or David Susskind, somebody has to be worthy of interest on the "Today," the "Tonight," and the "Tomorrow" shows. When a candidate for President of the United States consents to appear on "Laugh-In," then we know that politicians have recognized the primal value of the entertainment industry, and there is little left to distinguish government from show business or current events from coming attractions.

Even a vicious and violent war can become a form of pre- and postprandial entertainment, as we learned during the period of Vietnam, in which the death and mutilation of soldiers and the suffering of napalmed civilians could suffice to carry us through the cocktail hour and the period before bedtime.

As Daniel Boorstin has observed, "We need not be theologians to see that we have shifted responsibility for making the world interesting from God to the newspaperman." And we all contribute to this clamor for excitement—even those who, like myself, express their opposition to it—for news theater is so compelling that it is virtually impossible, short of banning all organs of communication from the house, to turn one's eyes from its hypnotic fascinations. For this reason, I must try to do what for me is a difficult thing, namely, to avoid the delicious temptations of outrage and indignation—and instead attempt to explain, as coolly as possible, why I have come to believe that news theater is having such a pernicious effect on the quality of our arts and the state of our culture (its corruption of our politics has already been accomplished).

It seems clear that the very thing that poets and intellectuals have desired for years has now come to pass—they have begun to achieve almost as much prominence as movie stars and politicians. From the day that Robert Lowell refused to appear at President Johnson's White House Festival of the Arts, in 1965, and The Times printed the story on the front page, it was obvious that cultural figures had begun to emerge into the limelight in America, until now hardly anybody is surprised to find a number of artists and intellectuals on the American equivalent of the Queen's List in England—the enemy list of Richard Nixon.

Patty Hearst: "Did the S.L.A. deliberately choose a bank with automatic cameras?"

Clearly, the public that was previously interested only in politicians, businessmen, revolutionaries, protesters, gangsters, theater celebrities and Presidential cronies has now begun to turn its eyes toward writers, thinkers, composers, painters, poets, journalists and critics. But instead of bringing about that Platonic Republic in which kings would be turned into philosophers, this development threatens to change the philosophers into politicians. To transform creative individuals into figures of the news, to convert complex questions of art into a species of personality exploitation, is, I think, to narrow the possibilities of growth, development and renewal in the very places where they are most desperately needed.

One of my texts for this theme is the career of Norman Mailer, a figure about whom I have grown increasingly apprehensive over the past years—not because I lack respect for his talent, but rather because this talent has proved so vulnerable to external pressures. Mailer personifies most dramatically the kind of havoc that news theater can visit on a creative personality. I have written elsewhere, perhaps too insistently, regarding my concern over Mailer's journey from a fiction writer to a writer of confessional autobiography to a candidate for political office to a journalist for Life and Esquire and finally to director and star of his own home movies. To some, this has looked like the career of a modern Renaissance man, a Leonardo of the present age, and there is no question that his reach has been ambitious. My question is about the scope of his actual accomplishment. Mailer has always seemed to me less interested in sublimating his gifts through art or invention than in aggrandizing his personality through publicity. In short, too much of his energy has been wasted in self-promotion and public relations, through the encouragement both of the consumers and producers of news theater.

Mailer seems to me almost preternaturally preoccupied with his cultural image, as if his overarching impulse were to dominate the Celebrity Register, to superimpose the star system on literature. Harvey Swados observed some years ago that the publishing industry was dominated by three names—Ernest Hemingway, Norman Mailer and J. D. Salinger—all of whom had managed to prosper as authors partly because they could be exalted as "personalities."

But of the three, only Mailer has consciously pursued this crown: Hemingway, we should remember, remained an expatriate from America most of his creative life, while Salinger made a deliberate decision for exile from the media, living in total isolation from reporters and interviewers in northern New England. In brief, only Mailer can be said to have thrown himself into the circus of news theater and tried to manipulate the cultural scene for his own advantage.

Unlike the others, Mailer elected to acknowledge the

(Continued on Page 44)

Continued from Page 39

show-business side of himself, motivated partly by ambition, partly by ego, partly by experiment, as if he could simultaneously profit by the culture's appetite for personalities and exploit it for creative purposes, through an act of personal transcendence. Almost 10 years ago, Norman Podhoretz (then one of Mailer's strongest supporters) observed this effort with considerable approval, hailing Mailer's career as "exemplary" because it was devoted to what Podhoretz claimed to be the primary question of American life: "Whether the pursuit of success need cripple a man spiritually, whether a man can work through the corruptions inherent in that pursuit without falling into the equally disabling corruptions inherent in the stance of hypocritical highmindedness."

Highmindedness, hypocritical or otherwise, has hardly been the most conspicuous quality of the decade which culminated in Watergate; and I have no way of knowing whether Mr. Podhoretz would still subscribe to his opinion of 10 years ago, whether he still believes Norman Mailer to be leading an "exemplary career." But the intervening years have shown us something about the consequences to the spirit implicit in the pursuit of success, and I think we may now be in a position to comment upon how effectively Mailer has managed to transcend the corruptions of the culture he embraced.

Am I alone in thinking that Mailer has now become almost completely swallowed up by his self-created role, that he perfectly fulfills Daniel Boorstin's definition of the celebrity as one "who is known for his well-knownness?" I do not doubt the value of Mailer's journalistic essays on the moon shot, on the march on the Pentagon, on the Clay-Liston fight, etc., though I confess to doubt over whether this value is lasting. What disturbs me is how Mailer's interest in himself has begun to dominate his interest in external events. His movies are completely without quality except as further episodes in his self-generated legend. And the most significant thing about the novel he has been announcing for the past five years is that it was sold to publishers for an unprecedented advance of $1-million.

As for Mailer's recent nonbook, a windy narrative about Marilyn Monroe accompanying a collection of photographs, it is simply a bid for increased notoriety through association with the notoriety of its subject. Full of scurrilous imputations about such rivals for glory as Arthur Miller and President Kennedy, scandalous in its confusion of fame with real achievement, it is inevitably being considered for a Broadway musical, and no doubt will one day make a full circle into a Hollywood movie, with Mailer playing one of the parts. Through this work, Mailer has managed to lose himself once and for all in news theater—to become, in Boorstin's words, a "human pseudo-event."

To answer Norman Podhoretz's question, then, 10 years after it was asked, we must conclude that the conscious pursuit of success does indeed cripple a man spiritually in this country, regardless of the degree of his self-consciousness—or, to put the problem into the language of a previous time, one can gain the whole world and still lose one's soul. Mailer has shown us that it is impossible to work through the corruptions inherent in the pursuit of success—in that sense only can we call his career exemplary. Through his exploits and self-advertisements, Mailer has been found by the talk shows, the newspapers, the literary supplements, the pop critics, the publishers, the Broadway producers, the moviemakers—in short, by news theater—but he has been lost to literature. I leave it to you to determine whether we should exult in what has been found . . . or mourn what has been irretrievably lost.

Obviously, figures like Mailer are more accomplices of this system than victims. But there are others who seem to be caught against their wills in the web of the media.

A poignant example of the malign effects of news theater on a gifted individual is the case of Joseph Papp, particularly in the past year, since he took over the stewardship of two theaters at Lincoln Center. On the basis of his work with the New York Shakespeare Festival, first in Central Park and then at the Public Theater on Lafayette Street, Papp attracted such attention over the years that the media virtually canonized him as the savior of the New York stage. And, as a matter of fact, nobody had worked so hard and so thanklessly in such a good cause. Papp had fought for years, against Park Commissioners, indifferent foundations and the resistance of Broadway, to develop a robust free Shakespeare in Central Park; and when he opened the Public Theater, he managed to extend his facilities to a large number of young writers, directors, actors and designers, in an atmosphere singularly free of pressure or privilege.

Papp's experiments at the Public Theater, like those of any theater, were of varying quality; the importance of the place was based not on the number of its hits, but rather on its freewheeling openness, set in motion by the galvanic energy of Papp himself. Had Broadway been functioning properly, Joe Papp would undoubtedly have continued developing his theater free of constraint as an open house of young, developing talent. The trouble was that the established theater was in a virtual collapse and theater commentators were surveying a barren landscape, with the result that Papp was inducted, willy-nilly, into the legions of news theater personalities.

In little more than a year, Papp was tintyped, coverstoried and interviewed in every organ of the news and, because he possessed a forceful, colorful personality, the public remained fastened on his burgeoning activities. The sense of bustle generated on the several stages of the Public Theater, seen against the inert background of the commercial theater uptown, created a sense that New York was on the brink of a theatrical renaissance that would be achieved entirely by Papp and his army of young discoveries: Jeff Bleckner, John Guare, David Rabe, Jason Miller, Dennis Reardon, Robert Montgomery, A. J. Antoon, Santo Loquasto.

It was not enough to say that the young people associated with the Public Theater were bright and gifted; they had to be installed, according to the conventions of news theater, in an instant hall of fame, thus invested with expectations far beyond their immediate capacity to fulfill. David Rabe, for example, on the basis of two poetically conceived plays of social conscience, was being hailed in some quarters as the finest American playwright of the decade. (Papp himself, no doubt partly out of showmanship, was declaring Rabe the logical successor to Eugene O'Neill.) Similarly, Robert Montgomery's promising fantasy on Dostoevski's "The Idiot," called "Subject to Fits," was bringing extravagant praise both to him and to his young director, A. J. Antoon, despite the workshop nature of the play and the relative inexperience of the playwright.

Encouraged by the enthusiastic reception of these works, Papp soon began to transfer some of his Public Theater successes to Broadway, hoping to fill the vacuum caused by the declining activity of the established producers; and it was not long before he was transferring plays to television and the movies as well. Although one of his motives for extending himself into commercial enterprises was to create a better financial base for his nonprofit theater, the work downtown occasionally took on some of the characteristics of pre-Broadway tryouts. The blunt, roughneck, sinewy style of Papp's Shakespeare in the Park at times degenerated into the musical-comedy glitter and self-conscious ethnicity of "Two Gentlemen of Verona," though it revived occasionally in such merry conceits as A. J. Antoon's "Much Ado About Nothing," while the experimental probings of earlier days tended to become overshadowed by a more conventional social realism which, perhaps coincidentally, was the dominant form of Broadway. Papp never lost his scrappy courage and independence, and he continued to take risks on young talents. But a new element had entered the air of his theater—an atmosphere of pressure, tension, competitiveness and sometimes even panic.

There were some who even detected certain changes in the nature of the man himself. The dynamic and generous Joe Papp, whose identifying characteristic is a kind of humane democratic openness, was beginning to grow interested in empire, acquiring properties and forming conglomerates like a 19th-century American tycoon. His impulse to proliferate encouraged him to look well beyond the horizons of his existing holdings, as he began collecting real estate and theaters in the same spirit that he collected talents and properties. When the Lincoln Center management was inevitably offered to Papp, it was perhaps inevitable that he would accept it, in magnificent hubristic defiance of that cursed inheritance which, like some merciless phantom, grips the throats of all who would embrace it.

It was possible that Papp had overextended himself, and his ambitions were exceeding his control. Around the same time as he took over Lincoln Center, Papp had been formulating plans for a "national theater" to consist partly of government-subsidized tours of Public Theater productions, the content "popularized," as he put it in one of his manifestos, "so it does not become a vehicle only for college professors and small college dramatic societies."

Papp's design to reach large audiences with the best dramatic productions—for example, his Shakespeare in the Park offered free to anybody willing to stand on line—was now being tailored for middle America, and he even began suggesting that whatever proved offensive or difficult to such audiences should be avoided on the tour.

I mention these national ambitions in order to suggest how easy it is for news theater to shape an image for an individual which he is then obliged to sustain. Certainly, Papp has continued to make a lot of good theater, but he has also been encouraged to make news as well. When invited, for example, to speak informally at Yale two years ago to a group of drama students (he had taught there very effectively in 1967), he arrived accompanied by a U.S.I.A. camera crew filming a documentary about him for the State Department, and proceeded to read a prepared statement to his astonished listeners with a recording device dangling from his neck.

There is something a little melancholy about this; but much more depressing is the fate being prepared for this gifted, embattled man by the media. For, as Boorstin writes, "The passage of time, which creates and establishes the hero, destroys the celebrity. . . . He will be destroyed, as he was made, by publicity. The newspapers make him, and they unmake him—not by murder but by suffocation and starvation."

& : we find ourselves with no heroes

Papp is too irrepressible to be destroyed by the media, but there is more than a hint of animus evident in the recent treatment of him. In the very first months of his tenure at Lincoln Center, he was savagely attacked by some members of the press for doing much the same kind of work he had just been praised for, while Rabe, Bleckner, Antoon, Montgomery and other Papp disciples are now being dismissed by reviewers as if they had never been enthroned. Some of the reviews of Rabe's "Boom Boom Room," not to mention almost all the productions that followed at the Beaumont, the Forum and the Public Theater, were peculiarly contemptuous and unqualified, especially when contrasted with the hyperbolic praise lavished on Papp's productions in the past, and although Papp still has his share of defenders, I would bet that the critics and reporters are preparing to bring his celebrity to an end. Whom the media would destroy, they first make famous.

In short, Papp's days as a culture hero of news theater are very probably numbered; and if he seems to be acting somewhat defensive and irascible these days, this may be because he senses he is an animal being prepared for sacrifice. Unquestionably, journalistic fickleness of this kind can create paranoia in the soundest man. But I see no conscious conspiracy here—merely confirmation of the fact that the only thing as newsworthy as success is . . . failure.

The cycle being enacted here is the historical cycle of news theater, and it is the cycle of ritual drama as well. The American celebrity—like Dionysus, Osiris and Jesus before him—is destined to suffer rejection, if not mutilation and death. Hatred and envy are too closely linked to reverence and love. Think back to Frank Sinatra in the forties and fifties having his clothes ripped off his back by screaming admirers. Think of what would happen today to any rock singer foolish enough to enter the adoring circle of his fans.

Still, to offer anthropological explanations is hardly to condone a situation which is becoming dangerous and intolerable. By imposing the ritual of news theater on the face of culture, the media are effectively determining that little in the way of serious culture will ever develop in New York. A process that requires calm, solitude, patience and growth is being turned into a form of gladiatorial

(Continued on Page 48)

Continued from Page 45

combat in which victims, after a moment of triumph, are mangled to bits before our eyes. Collaborative arts, involving the cooperation of many talents, are treated as if they were the creation of a single glorified individual. Poor erring mortals are intoxicated by the hubris which leads to their downfall. And men of genuine promise are cut off in their prime, either by excessive praise or excessive neglect.

What to do? Well, first, I obviously see some hope in diagnosing the condition, for the values of our culture are identical with the symptoms of the disease. Second, at the risk of sounding old-fashioned, my usual failing, I propose to those Americans unfortunate enough to qualify for news theater that they develop the will to resist it, and to those of us inclined to watch it that we try to cultivate some admiration for character rather than for personality. Character is the intrinsic nature of the self that is expressed through behavior; personality is the external image of the self manufactured through the efforts of the media.

To abandon the mutilating rituals of news theater is to abandon celebrity, to persist with one's work regardless of all histrionic temptations, to make a conscious sacrifice of both the appeals and degradations of the public life. It means giving up immediate gratifications for the sake of more ultimate and lasting goals, pricking the side of one's intent with some other spur than fame.

This is a difficult and perhaps impossible thing to ask of talented Americans, but what is the alternative? No culture, only flashes on the evening news; no accomplishments that cannot be degraded by publicity; no truth that is not swallowed up in images; no heroes, only celebrities, whirling dizzily in the carrousel of fashion, until their faces vanish in a blur. ■

Arab guerrilla: One of a group that "commanded the attention of the world's media" by assassinating 11 members of Israel's Olympic team at Munich in 1972.

Replays

We resent reruns now because we have so few channels & a rerun limits our options significantly.

We hesitate perhaps to criticize TV's mass audience & commentators bec of our "democratic" philos.

Color seems to be the biggest
inner our comm industry can
muster — color TV & color phones.

communities of interest v. geographical comm.

"company towns"
"town antys"
etc.

TV programming is forced by institutional & economic forces to be the lowest common denom of our public life.

What is the $ value of

1. time given ††
2. time in newscasts, documentaries, etc given candidates

For more work

1. time v. space
   psych perceptions
   ease of consumer choice
   returnability
   etc.

2. "structural" regul v ad hoc reg.

3. The "power" of TV

Notes on conv w/ John Peirce 1/20/76

1. TV has deflected people's political awareness & indignation to issues they can't do much about (because of wide area of coverage & impact of national networking.

2. Cable: programming will face a competition between interest in content & quality / slickness of production

3. Interesting to contrast TV & telephone — in terms of personal interaction v. spectator; "local" v. national; known v. observed.

4. With relatively few channels ~~(100?)~~ (100-1000?) & cost of transmission relatively high (compared to telephone) & with cost of switch control low (w/ new tech & telephone EPABX switches): any old switching tech can be used & cost of switching isn't likely to be a major factor in cable TV -- at least until 2-way becomes widespread v "tree"

over

5. See Harold Rosen on satellite tech
See Roy Tillotson (BTL) on thoughtful analysis of role of satellites
See Stu Miller (BTL) on fiber optics
Ask Bill Baker for intro on BTL people

6. Fiber optics cost will come down.
Offer less (3-5 db/km) attenuation making ~~repeate~~ amplifiers less numerous (1 TV channel/fiber more or less); likely to go digital.

A Media Approach to Inflation

By Marshall McLuhan

TORONTO—Until now there have been many equilibrium theories of inflation. I am going to propose a disequilibrium theory based on the discontinuous nature of the electric information of today.

In the eighteenth century, Adam Smith got economics into orbit by linking the laws of the market to the automatism of the Newtonian universe. By this rhetorical device, the laws of economics were given a rigor and lucidity that they did not then or now possess. At least Adam Smith gave his theories some relevance to the then dominant science of astronomy.

Today, however, in the electric age when The Word Makes The Market, inflation theory still lumbers along on the wagon wheels of nineteenth-century rhetoric. The Marxists say inflation can be cured with more production, while the Keynesians say it can be cured with more money applied at the right place and time. Whereas all current inflation theories tend toward Newtonian rationality and balance, there is a huge disequilibrium factor of irrationality that results from information movement in simultaneous and instantaneous patterns.

These patterns are sometimes mistaken for "trends" in media behavior. As Jean-Louis Servan-Schreiber wrote in his book, "The Power to Inform": "One of the most easily confirmed consequences of media activity is the instability that can be created through the media's ability to exacerbate certain trends. This happened during the world monetary crisis that took shape in the 1960's. As soon as dollars started to move en masse into Germany, the press described it as a flood. The movement did in fact take on vast proportions because even modest speculators wanted to benefit from the situation. The press in turn wrote in terms of a veritable panic. Then all holders of capital got the news and reacted accordingly, and the dam burst under a pressure that had been generated solely by the media. The same kind of psychic battering ram brought about the devaluations of the dollar in 1971 and 1973."

The twentieth century opened with Max Planck's theory of quantum mechanics in 1900, stating the discontinuity of the material universe. In the same year Sigmund Freud published his "Interpretation of Dreams" stating the discontinuities of our conscious and unconscious lives. So far as I am aware, economists have not yet matched physics and psychology with any statement of the discontinuity of the economic bond. All existing theories of inflation are hardware theories, nuts and bolts theories, theories of connected and continual rational processes of supply and demand.

The equilibrium theories of supply and demand concern the quantities of "hardware" as it were, whereas the disequilibrium realities occur at the speed of "software." "Software" is the world of electric information and also computer programing. It can, however, be understood to include the entire world of electronic services that began with the telegraph and which include the telephone as well as television and satellites. All of these constitute a new service environment of electronic pulsation which makes possible the dealing in "futures" and the anticipation of the gaps and intervals in supply and demand.

At electric speeds of information movement, it is precisely these intervals that invite the dealer in "futures" to gamble. Instant information reveals a wide diversity of new patterns of change which entice everybody to anticipate changes to come. Ordinary people are thus inspired with the gambling mania which is born of perception, not of the connection, but of the interval between the now and the rapidly approaching new situation. This becomes a way of living "as if every moment were your next."

The instant and simultaneous have no sequence or connections, but are characterized by resonant intervals and discontinuity. In the new world environment of instant information there is need to pay attention to the neglected factor of the gap or interval as crux in creating inflation.

As long as there is an interval of play between the wheel and the axle, there is a rotary action. It is the interval of play that keeps the wheel and axle in touch. And the gap or interval is "where the action is." This fact has gained special attention from the new physics; and it is in the very opening of "The Nature of the Chemical Bond" that Linus Pauling explains there are "no connections" in matter. The development of the theory of quantum mechanics "has also introduced into chemical theory a new concept, that of resonance . . . and it is our resonant interval . . ." What is most relevant here to the nature of inflation may perhaps be seen from the way in which the gap or interval in things creates the mentality of the gambler:

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who fears to put it to the touch
To win or lose it all.

It is precisely "touch" that is the resonating world of the gap or interval. Touch is literally created by a resonant interval, between, say the hand and the thing. If there were any connection between the hand and the thing, there would be no hand. The gambler is above all the man who must stay in touch, and in the new "physics" of the instantaneous electric environment it is precisely the resonant interval or "touch" that characterizes the information that constitutes the new service environment, established by the universal accessibility of instant information.

■

For the dominant environment of our age has itself become information or "software." Since at electric speed any *figure* tends to become *ground*, and anything, however trivial, can acquire infinite mass, the temptation and the desire to gamble with everything and anything becomes obsessive. One dollar at the speed of light can do as many transactions as a million at pre-electric speeds. Quantitative projections and rational critiques cannot cope here.

In the new electric environment almost any situation has a structure eligible for gambling, much as Lloyds of London was prepared to insure any part of the body—busts, legs, or even states of mind and popularity—against the whims of chance. Using the language of gestalt psychology, it could be said that inflation makes everything a *figure* against the *ground* of public interest. *Figure* and *ground* constitute the structure of most situations and are in perpetual interface of flux. However, in the pulsating world of the intervals in electric information, there are innumerable opportunities to seize and abstract the interval itself as a new kind of object to be exploited.

There are days when large bodies of corporate funds are not in use, and the idea readily occurs: "Why not make them electrically available for a few hours to some other part of the world?" It was perhaps the dawning awareness of the utility of the interval that prompted the phrase "time is money." At electric speeds, however, a very little time can