THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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The Future Of TV: A Light To Lead

VERY little implication can be drawn from a CHARLOTTE NEWS week-long study of violence on night-time television.

The report merely showed that in the time period from 5:11 p.m. there were 83 violent deaths in seven days. With the current emphasis on western drama, most of the victims toppled over from gunplay.

The 83 deaths were obtusely compared with 36 violent deaths reported in both local newspapers for the same week. While the ratio is more than two to one, this is no comparative yardstick.

Most of the newspaper deaths were accidental. They included five burning deaths and another five as auto fatalities. Of the five homicides, it is always difficult to prove premeditated murder. Only the nine Cubans who died before the firing squad were deaths which could be called purposely engineered.

It must be remembered that the 83 deaths on television were written into the script deliberately. Casting about for likely subjects to hold watchers' interest, the television industry has found a solid formula with westerns and private detective shows. Both are natural candidates for violence.

Certainly, there would be little drama in watching cowboys mending fences or riding with the herd for 30 minutes, but if they have to shoot it out with rustlers people will watch.

The Fund for the Republic has just compiled a comprehensive survey of the television industry. In it is the report that the average audience for GUNSMOKE, a top favorite in recent years, is 47,073,000. It is an unusual Saturday night when somebody isn't riddled with bullets, as good invariably triumphs with smoking six-gun.

If perchance, the public should feel that 83 violent deaths is far too many in a week's nighttime viewing, then it is the public's responsibility to protest.

It is clear that this doesn't happen.

The aforementioned GUNSMOKE, to quote the survey, draws an average of 25 letters per program or .0027 per cent of its audience. No mention was made how many of these 25 were pro or con. But the sponsors and network must surmise that they have the right approach.

Television, bound as it is to the capitalistic profit world, must show a dividend for its sponsors. The best method thus devised for the popularity of a given show has been by rating index. Dramatic shows, especially those with violence as a basic theme, are among the rating leaders.

This is merely a reflection of the public's taste.

The crux of the entire argument for or against violence and the mediocrity of supporting scripts lies within the television industry itself.

Admittedly, the field is a fast-growing toddler, still in knee pants woven of cloth of gold. Walking before it can run, it has been content to cater to its public. Its world has become, in the main, an entertaining device for its millions of watchers.

But, shall television, a great potential force, remain merely a mirror of society? Can it afford to sit in the audience of public influence and never take the stage to speak?

Individual stations offer something akin to this idea with "public service" programs. But the network is almost stripped of programming to inform or educate. It just doesn't make money.

In a larger sense, with all its wonderful tools and skills, it is to be hoped that the spirit of television will change one day, that there will be an industry desire to lead, strong enough to convince sponsors and public alike.

A slow transition, yes. But one with purpose. One which can match the unlimited possibilities of the medium itself.

The Page 1 Rocket: Several Ideas

ROCKETS to probe outer space take off in grand style, but once aloft they have little but time and distance to offer America's headline-hungry newspapers.

An exception, of course, was our "talking satellite," but even that effort ran down its batteries like an old hand-cranked phonograph.

A spot check of out-of-town papers crossing our desk pinpointed the journalistic feeling about Pioneer IV. Four days and 412,000 miles later the news of the U. S. sun shot had all but left Page 1. To quote an unnamed National Aeronautics and Space Administration spokesman, "Pioneer IV is gone forever."

Once a space probe quits sending signals there just isn't much to write about unless it turns up as a slice of burned toast in trying to re-enter home atmosphere.

That has created a problem for our space administrators. They need to keep their launching efforts before the public. They seem to have had a hard time of it with Pioneer IV, gold-washed nose cone or not.

Our rockets need flair, showmanship, something to keep them in the news.

For example:

Install a radio, but have it transmitting Ed Murrow's sex-for-sale program. Most everybody has heard about it and papers will use it again.

Bring in the local angle news coverage with taped recordings from major cities' officials. Pie in the sky stories are hard to find these days.

The flight itself could be sponsored through Madison Avenue outlets of government. John Cameron Swayze would be a natural for the commercials, perhaps utilizing a remote-control television hookup if he wouldn't care to take the trip.

For the youth of America, and of course another good news idea, the most popular rock 'n' roll combo should be put aboard in person. Their sound efforts would thoroughly confuse every monitoring Red station. Their sacrifice would be remembered by music lovers and the press.

And, should they be lost in permanent orbit, it's like they say — that's show business.

Boy Scouts Reflect A Period Of Change

WHEN we were coming along, the Boy Scouts were a vital part of a youngster's life. There was no television, movies were limited to a Saturday afternoon, and "Buck Rogers in The Twenty-Fifth Century" was lively radio action.

Scouting was king in the 1930s. It had less competition and it was sufficient to take care of a small-town boy's vacant hours.

Summer camp was the greatest time, and even those who couldn't afford uniforms stood proudly at evening retreat in ragged but attentive line.

The meetings were best when a game period was declared after the serious business of the night. It took strength of purpose to hold fast in a contest of "Capture The Flag" when the lights were out.

Our atomic age youth is given a far stronger program today. But they can never feel the thrill of buying, with hard-earned money, that first "official" scout knife after wearing a hand-me-down uniform for a couple of years.

We knew there were such things as Explorer Scouts, but they were a rare breed. Now it has come to pass that this category is to evolve with new purpose, program and dress of what was Sunday best 20 years or more ago.

These modern Explorers are to be in a pilot program involving citizenship, business training and other current subjects.

Our motley band would have scoffed at wearing coat and tie as a uniform. But then, the Ivy League hadn't been formed, a ducktail belonged on a bird and delinquents were people who never paid their taxes.

From The Christian Science Monitor

UNCLAIMED 'PLACE IN THE SUN'

ONE question that fascinates climatologists and especially "kibitzing" laymen is whether weather phenomena follow recurring patterns.

To the climatologist the objective is greater understanding, leading possibly to some degree of adaptation if not control. With some laymen, we fear, something akin to superstition enters in, and answers are likely to be thrown into the same category as "woolly bear" caterpillars and ground hog shadows. Of course, the obvious limitations of these signs show up in the question: If caterpillars on the Hudson grow wide bands of "wool" and a ground hog in Pennsylvania sees his shadow, what of the winter in Montana and Arkansas?

St. Louis is facing this question in reverse. One local meteorologist notes that St. Louis' three destructive tornadoes—1896, 1927, 1959—occurred exactly 31 years and four months apart. And he places them in sunspot cycles. To which another meteorologist retorts: "Nothing but coincidence!" We would add the query: What did the sunspots do to Gardners Neck, Massachusetts, or to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, on February 10, 1959? Why did they "zero in" on St. Louis?

No civic pride, especially not that seasoned variety characteristic of venerable cities, is like to tempt St. Louis into claiming this "place in the sun."

People's Platform

Television Is Gory? It's All Shakespeare's Fault

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

I READ with horror Julian Scheer's revelation that "television is bloodier two to one." I've seen a lot of guys getting shot and shot at on TV—but I had no idea we were killing folks at the rate of 83 in 28 hours! You may be sure that we will make every effort to reduce these horrifying fatalities!

Despite the fact that I thought your article was interesting and revealing, I must take exception to one small poke you took at "Hamlet." Did you really mean that "Hamlet" was "a so-called 'classic' drama"? Just between us, if Shakespeare's "Hamlet" ain't a classic, what in Heaven's name is? I will however write Shakespeare immediately and suggest that he delete all this mayhem!

Now to make a long letter long, etc. I would like to quote an editorial from this week's "Broadcasting Magazine":

"When newspaper and magazine writers run out of things to say, they often resort to a trusted but specious device—counting the fictional murders on the air to prove that television (if used to be radio) is educating the young in crime and violence.

"We saw a show on television the other night, and it had six murders—all gruesome. Now if the quality of television is to be measured by the incidence of mayhem, the show we saw ought never to have been brought to the air. Six murders in one program? Think of the effect on the kiddies.

"In case you want to write your Congressman about this outrage, the show was "Hamlet" and it was broadcast on CBS-TV."

Also, since you have labeled "Hamlet" as a so-called classic, the thought occurred to me that possibly you and your readers may be interested in what some of the other newspapers around the country had to say about the television presentation. These are all direct quotations:

New York Herald Tribune: "The production emerged as one that was exciting, beautifully staged and swiftly paced . . . All the performances were first rate . . . The direction by Mr. Nelson was most efficient and the settings by Bob Markell truly magnificent."

New York Journal American: "A brilliantly clarified triumph of speeding up and simplifying the long, complicated tragedy . . . a fast, fine triumph."

Chicago Tribune: ". . . the top show of the year . . . will make every viewer look forward to the next opportunity to meet Shakespeare . . ."

Washington Post and Times Herald: "One of the greatest programs ever offered to the TV audience . . . May have given an entire generation a new idea of Shakespeare's worth . . . a glorious evening, a TV triumph . . ."

Boston Herald: ". . . a glorious evening of television . . . skillful and superb performance . . . Live and vibrant production . . ."

Cleveland Plain Dealer: ". . . a triumph of adaptation, production and acting . . . truly remarkable . . ."

Detroit News: "Hamlet" packed a terrific impact . . . a powerful production with a crashing climax . . ."

Los Angeles Times: "A superb production . . ."

United Press International: "Fine production . . . Outstanding were the mad scene, graveyard scene and dueling scene . . ."

Associated Press: ". . . a superb production . . . Magnificent work by producer-director Ralph Nelson . . . No such drama could have been edited any more effectively . . ."

To steal a phrase from one of the "so-called classics," I end this epistle by simply saying — until we meet again — "good-night, Sweet Prince."

— CHARLES H. CRUTCHFIELD
Executive Vice President
Jefferson Standard Broadcasting Co.

Much Classic Fiction Is A Bit Bloody, Too

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

YOU certainly had a gory time of it when you watched television for a week of evenings to secure the material for your article in the March 3 Charlotte News. It must have been quite revolting to you especially as you have evidently not done much fiction reading. A number of the classics are a bit gory also, if I remember correctly.

You missed one good point however. One of the programs you viewed had six murders in it alone, all gruesome. By your measurement, it should never have been brought to the air—six murders in one program! Think of the effect on the kiddies alone.

In case you missed this outrage, it was entitled "Hamlet," and it was written by a chap named Shakespeare.

I would certainly not expect to read about such horrible details in The Charlotte News, either in the news columns or on the comic page.

Yours for less realism everywhere.

—E. L. GLUCK
Chairman of the Board
WSOC Broadcasting Co.

P. S. Tell your artist to look again at his television screen. It is not square as he drew it but oblong with a horizontal dimension [illegible] units and the vertical dimension [illegible] units.

Does TV Violence Make Him A Menace?

Move . . . Gunning For Little Old Us?

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

A FELLOW named Bret Maverick was in town today asking for you. Don't be surprised if he pays you a visit sometime soon.

—WILLIAM M. SCRUGGS JR.
Promotion Manager
WSOC-TV

Why Force People To Buy Insurance?

Spartanburg, S. C.

Editors, The News:

FORCED BUYING of any kind of insurance is dangerous and represents dangerous thinking. True, we need to rid our highways of irresponsible drivers and to protect life and property. But we need to think twice.

Take licenses when facts warrant, yes; jail overt offenders who endanger others, certainly, but what comes next and next and next after we start forcing citizens to pay more and more for the carelessness of their fellows?

As a voter who drives no more than the law permits, who not long ago drove to California in 4½ days in a four-cylinder American-made car at never more than 55 miles an hour, I don't see why I should be forced to ante up for the carelessness of others.

I will gladly pay more for more supervision, more pointed suspensions, more attention to the greatest offenders of all—those giant moron car-crushers roaming our highways at any speed they choose.

I am my brother's keeper, to help him obey the law, but not to pay penance for his continued wanton flouting and breaking of the law.

—JOHN P. (JACK) SHOLAR

Two Problem Areas: Setbacks & Education

Charlotte

Editor, The News:

HAVING lived in the lovely city for 28 years and watched its phenomenal growth and progress, I have no difficulty believing the most optimistic forecasts for the future. I am distressed on occasion by what appears to me to be lack of foresight in view of these forecasts.

Item 1: East Morehead Street, it is claimed, will probably bear the heaviest traffic load in the Charlotte of the future. In view of this protection it should have at least six or eight lanes for traffic. It now has four. Until very recently, the deed restrictions required a 60-foot building setback, which was more than sufficient for future widening of the street. The zoning authorities, however, now permit a 20-foot setback, and already there are at least two buildings under construction, or completed, which will make it extremely difficult ever to widen the street to the proportions needed—particularly if some consideration should finally be given the esthetic factors.

Some years ago, before zoning laws were set up, my church (Ascension Lutheran) sought permission of all property owners in the area to extend a small wing of the church building 15 feet over the building line — more for esthetic reasons than for utilitarian reasons. We were prevented by one negative voice among the property owners. But the point is that we felt then already that there should be a setback of 40 or 45 feet minimum. The Charlotte of 300,000 or 400,000 or more should have some downtown arteries and plazas of majestic proportions. Isn't this the time to make provisions for such developments? We could at least take some very simple steps to prevent present favorable situations from becoming unfavorable or even impossible.

Item 2: The community college is a wonderful thing! It is also a terribly expensive thing! Any good modern college campus means an investment of millions — more millions than we anticipate! (My denomination is now spending near the $10 million mark on a campus which we thought we could build for $3 million to $4 million). The costs of operation have also pyramided! Nevertheless, the community institution is needed — and worth the tremendous outlay of money.

But will no voice be raised to inquire why we are planning to build and operate TWO such colleges in the Charlotte area? And this in a day of such rapid change in our social structure? And when students of different races are already attending the same schools, especially in higher education? What will the picture be 10 years from now? How can we justify the expenditure can we justify the expenditure?

—LESLIE F. FRERKING
Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension

The Good Earth

The Stultifying Drama

How To Balance A Budget

By WALTER LIPPMANN

WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT'S budget is once a football in a political scrimmage. Both parties are pretending that they are struggling to balance the budget. In fact, neither the administration nor the Congress shows any sign of being willing to vote the taxes which are absolutely essential if the budget is to be balanced.

As of now, both parties regard as unmountable the income tax rates which were fixed in 1954, the date of the Eisenhower reduction of taxes. The President's budget plan, if we accept some rather fancy calculations, can be brought into balance — but only if Congress will raise postal rates and increase the gasoline taxes. As Congress is certain to reject the new taxes, the official theory of the Democrats seems to be that they can balance the budget by cutting down on what the President has asked for in foreign aid.

GOP'S PLIGHT

Both parties have now worked themselves into a jam which, considering the state of the world, is not an inspiring thing to look at. The Republicans have gotten themselves into a position where they must "save" on spending for native American needs — such as education and public facilities, almost certainly also the national defense. But the Republicans, as the great savers, are implored by the President to spend abroad on foreign aid the sums they would like to spend here at home.

The Democrats on the other hand have worked themselves into the embarrassing position where they, the party of Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman, and Stevenson, are threatening to save on foreign aid in order to spend more at home.

Should Income Tax Rates Be Hiked?

Surely, there is something inherently absurd in a situation where the Republicans are the globalists and the Democrats are the isolationists. Could such a topsy-turvy situation have developed if politicians in both parties had not forgotten the realities of our national needs while they play politics with the budget and with taxes?

What has happened to all these earnest and patriotic men? They have become entangled in a dilemma which few of the members of Congress and none of the leaders in Washington have the courage to challenge. What is the dogma? It is that the budget should be balanced? No. The budget should if possible be balanced, and if that is impossible, there should nevertheless be a serious attempt made to balance it.

The dogma which confuses the whole situation and the position of both parties is that the budget must be balanced without raising the income tax rates. The crux of the matter is the acceptance by both sets of political leaders of the dogma that the income tax rates of 1954 are sacrosanct.

LOCKED IN A ROOM

Once that dogma is accepted, the budget cannot be balanced except by two equally unacceptable methods. One is to balance it by taxes on consumption. This is something that Congress will not now do. The other method is to balance the budget at the expense of our national defense and of our foreign policy, and of our internal public needs and development. This is something that the country cannot afford to do.

Here, having accepted the dogma about the 1954 income tax rates, we have locked ourselves in a room from which there is no decent exit.

THE PROSPECT

What is in prospect now, unless there is a revival of national leadership at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue is, first, a budget which does not balance because Congress and the President between them will not produce the taxes necessary balance it; second, a budget which does not support our national interests at home and abroad, and will therefore have to be supplemented in the near future by extraordinary appropriations.

While this is going on we shall have to pay the price of having neglected our national needs because we were too soft and too timid to tax ourselves enough.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

White House Budget Will Be Probed

WASHINGTON

CONGRESSMAN Bill Dawson of Illinois, who acts as No. 1 congressional watchdog, has ordered the comptroller general to audit President Eisenhower's White House expenses.

Dawson is chairman of the House Government Operations Committee which guards against government extravagance, and is disturbed over the high cost of running the White House, particularly since the occupant has been crying for economy.

Lavish Spending

Ike is spending $5,013,750 to operate the White House this fiscal year, more than double the $2,467,000 ex-President Truman spent during his last and most expensive year. This includes such upkeep as servants, gardening, office staff, etc., and does not include the upkeep of helicopters, airplanes, two yachts, and the total budget for the executive establishment.

On top of this doubling of the Truman budget, Ike is asking for a $332,000 increase next year at the same time he is ordering everyone else to economize.

In a confidential letter to the comptroller general, Dawson called for a full accounting of Ike's bills. He intends to compare each item with what Truman and Roosevelt spent. The congressman from Chicago can't understand why Eisenhower, who entertains much less, should spend so much more to run the White House.

Truman Spent Less

Note — Total Eisenhower budget for the executive offices is now $52,738,250, which includes the National Security Council, Budget Bureau, and other offices operating under the White House. Truman spent a total of $6,703,000 on the executive offices budget during his last year in office. Ike is asking $91,880,000 for next year, this to include new Civil and Defense Mobilization offices.

Roots Of Extravagance

Democrats who have taken a look at Eisenhower's spending believe his own extravagance stems from (1) his Army background when GI servants, cars and planes were always at his beck; and (2) his millionaire golfing partners who live in luxury but have been drumming home on the President that he must cut school, farm, and welfare spending.

Humphrey's Record

Democrats also point to the fact that one Eisenhower intimate, George Humphrey of National Steel, has championed economy for most interests except his own. He called the St. Lawrence Seaway a "socialistic ditch" until the M. H. Hanna Co., which he formerly headed, purchased iron ore deposits in Labrador and needed the cheaper transportation provided by the Seaway. As Ike's first secretary of the Treasury, Humphrey reversed himself and fought vigorously for the same seaway he had formerly denounced.

Humphrey also opposed fast tax write-offs for companies other than his own.

"They add to inflation and give favored companies an unfair advantage over competitors," he argued in 1954.

"But they weren't so bad when you got a $315 million tax write-off for your National Steel Company," shot back Congressman Albert Thomas, Texas Democrat, "or when you got $11 million for your Canadian Ore Co. If these tax write-offs are so bad, why don't you repeal them?"

Golfing Cabinet

Other members of Ike's golfing cabinet include William Robinson, head of Coca-Cola; Barry Leithead, president of Cluett, Peabody & Co.; and Clifford Roberts of Reynolds & Co.