

## REVIEW AND COMMENT

### Moyers on America: A Journalist and His Times

By Bill Moyers

*The New Press, New York, N.Y.*  
(204 pages, \$24.95)

### The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications

By Paul Starr

*Basic Books, New York*  
(484 Pages, \$27.50)

By Bernard S. Redmont

**B**ill Moyers is a national treasure. Nobody on television – or on the printed page – makes us more proud to be American. He is more than a journalist, broadcaster, story teller, social commentator and moral beacon. In the words of that other national treasure, our CBS colleague Walter Cronkite, “Moyers speaks for, and to, the conscience of our nation.”

When Moyers announced he was leaving his weekly PBS magazine *Now* after the November presidential elections, his millions of fans feared his voice might wane. But that's not the case. Moyers is still going strong in other

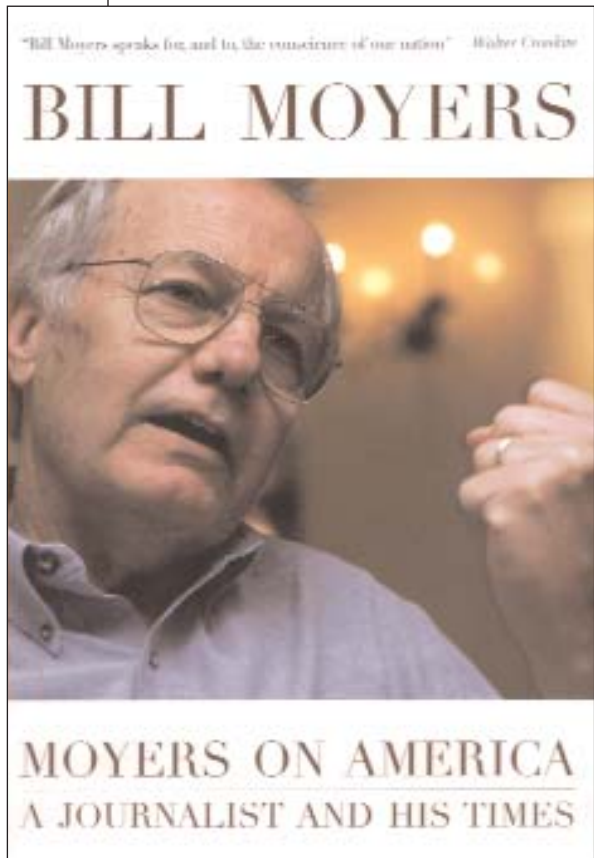
ways.

Moyers capped a broadcasting career of over 30 years with *Now*. He had hosted *Bill Moyers' Journal* on PBS back in 1970. He moved to CBS for a decade as a commentator, contributing to the *Evening News* and acting as chief correspondent for CBS Reports.

Returning to PBS, he created documentary series like *In Search of the Constitution*, *God and Politics*, *World of Ideas*, *The Power of the Word*, *The Public Mind* and *Listening to America with Bill Moyers*.

Some became successful books. *One, Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth*, was a best seller for a year.

At one point, in 1995, Moyers joined



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NBC News as a senior analyst and commentator, and a year later he hosted the sister cable network MSNBC's Insight program.

At *Now*, he said his aim was "to tell stories nobody else is telling, and put on people who have no forum elsewhere."

Moyers has won more than 30 Emmy awards, and also Peabody and DuPont-Columbia University accolades. His name even has been floated periodically by political progressives who wanted to draft him to run for President.

He calls himself "a pilgrim." His pilgrimage began with birth in Oklahoma, but he didn't stay long. Moyers started his career as a cub reporter for a small town Texas newspaper. He was ordained as a Baptist minister. He served as deputy director of the Peace Corps in President John F. Kennedy's Administration. He worked for President Lyndon B. Johnson as special assistant and later as press secretary. He left Washington in the late 1960s to become publisher of *Newsday* on Long Island.

Working in partnership with his wife Judith Davidson Moyers, he turned to TV – and it was television at its best. He isn't giving up public TV entirely, but he will concentrate on writing a long-planned book on his former boss, LBJ. He hopes to complete a draft by the end of 2005.

Meanwhile, as a foretaste of the work to come, he tells a story or two in his latest book, *Moyers on America*. Moyers says that the first time LBJ asked him to be his spokesman, he declined. "He asked me again, and again I declined. The third time he didn't ask. My arm still hurts."

Moyers feels ambivalent about LBJ – positive on his progressive domestic

policies, negative on his deplorable Vietnam war policy.

When Johnson was on vacation in Texas, he would often go to the faculty club at the University, which was still off limits to blacks in 1964. Moyers remembers the night that changed. There was a stir when LBJ entered, and everybody looked up. "The President of the United States was entering with one of his secretaries on his arm – a beautiful black woman." A professor of law, Ernest Goldstein, who opposed the club's segregationist policies, asked Moyers if the President knew what he was doing. Bill said, "He knows." The next day, Goldstein called the club to announce he intended to bring some black associates to a meeting there. "No problem at all," said the woman on the phone. "Are we really integrated?" Goldstein asked. "Yes sir," she answered. "The President of the United States integrated us last night."

Eventually, Moyers, who opposed the Vietnam war, told LBJ he was leaving, and the President said, "If I had to do it over again, I'd come to the White House as a presidential assistant, not as president." Moyers asked why. And LBJ replied, "Because you can quit and I can't."

*Moyers on America* deserves to be read by more than his millions of TV fans. It is really about no less than "the soul of democracy." He feels "the soul of democracy has been dying, drowning in a rising tide of big money contributed by a narrow elite that has betrayed the faith of citizens in self-government."

The book is largely a selection of his commentaries, reflections and speeches edited to resemble essays and brought up to date to give them freshness and

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urgency. In it, Moyers not only tells stories from his life; he shares his wisdom, and his philosophy. Whether it be his analysis of the domination of news media by conglomerates, the poison of celebrity-obsessed journalism, corporate scandals, or the corruption and bribery of today's money-ruled politics, or the growing gap between rich and poor, Moyers hits the target every time, with candor, honesty and passion.

He recalls that one of the commercial networks commissioned a poll in which voters were asked, "Do you think that our elected representatives are dedicated public servants or lying windbags?" Forty three percent said that the officials were a bunch of lying windbags. Just 36 percent said they thought elected officials were dedicated public servants. This was true regardless of their party – Republicans, Democrats and independents alike.

"Millions of Americans," he says, "are alienated, apathetic and disillusioned about politics. Fewer than half of us bother to vote at all in our presidential elections – compared to 80 percent a century ago – and only about one-third vote in our congressional elections. People will tell you they feel betrayed, sold out by a political class of professional electioneers, big donors, lobbyists and the media."

Still, Moyers has an abiding faith that the good will and faith of Americans will ultimately prevail.

A plus for the reader is that Moyers writes beautifully and eloquently. He illuminates critical current issues with deep conviction, and can be erudite and humanly warm at the same time. One of the most moving parts of the book is a

simple, but meaningful story about an "average" American woman. Another is a eulogy about a dear friend. Other sections deal compassionately with aging and good dying.

Moyers begins his foreword by writing, "We journalists write on the sand and speak into the wind, and usually by the morning after, there isn't a trace of what we wrote or said."

That may be true about most of us – but it's not about Bill Moyers.

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**T**elevision enjoys a reputation as an authentic creation of American culture, eventually bestowed upon an eager world. But it's not really an American invention. The U.S. came late into the medium. TV took off in the U.S. only after World War II, and really flourished in the past half-century.

Nevertheless, television had a "false start" during the 1920s, an oddity that few TV history buffs realize. At that early stage, inventors in both Europe and America developed prototypes based on the 1884 work of a German inventor, Paul Nipkow.

The concept involved a mechanical apparatus, a spinning disk with perforated holes, used for both transmitting and receiving moving images. By 1925, a Scottish inventor John Logie Baird was demonstrating a primitive working model.

During the 1920s, using a related system, the inventor Charles Francis Jenkins gave the first public demonstration of TV in America. In 1927, President Herbert Hoover appeared on an AT&T television demonstration transmitted from Washington to a

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receiver in New York. With backing from Wall Street and an experimental license from the Federal Radio Commission, Jenkins went into production of TV sets and began regular broadcasts from a TV station in Washington. By the end of 1928, the FRC had granted 28 experimental licenses.

Paul Starr, the author of the monumental work, *The Creation of the Media*, relates this “false start” of TV, as a little-known historical note. He says that 100,000 Americans saw a Jenkins TV during this period. There was no advertising. When the stock market crashed, so did TV in its first incarnation. Jenkins's company, depending on sales of receivers, failed.

But British and German state broadcasting systems, not depending on commercial success, continued telecasts during the early 1930s when America had none. The Nazi government began the first regular public TV service in Berlin in 1935, and by the late 1930s the BBC had regular telecasts. As a personal aside, while on a Pulitzer Traveling fellowship in the summer of 1939, I watched the Wimbledon tennis matches on British TV in the home of an acquaintance in Britain. TV was hardly a gleam in the American eye at the time.

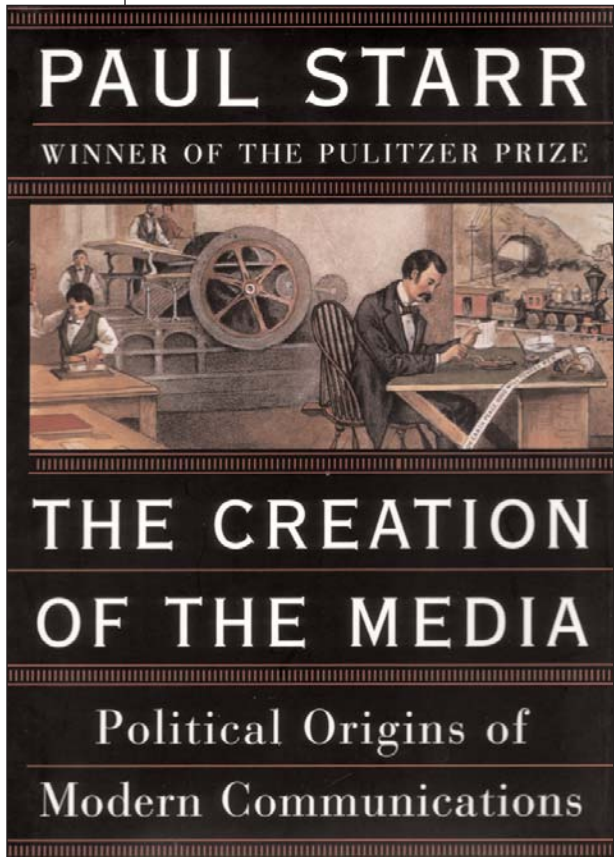
Starr reports that TV had been stalled in the U.S. by the specter of monopoly, The FCC and much of the radio

industry feared that a single company (RCA) was positioning itself to dominate the new industry. After World War II, TV in the U.S. began in earnest, and this time flourished.

This is all you will find about TV in Starr's sweeping cavalcade of media history, from the development of printing around 1450, through the press, the postal and telecommunications system, motion pictures and radio broadcasting.

Nonetheless, readers associated with or interested in television will find the work extremely useful. It is illuminating and fascinating as groundwork for understanding visual media.

Starr sets forth an original thesis, and



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he proves it convincingly. He argues that American media structure is not dictated by technology and innovation, but rather by political choices and decisions. In other words, politics created our media world.

A Pulitzer prize winner for non-fiction in 1984, Starr is Professor of Sociology at Princeton and the co-editor of the liberal magazine about politics, policy and ideas, *The American Prospect*. It took him a decade to write this extraordinary work.

What is especially valuable about the book is his attention to choices made in the U.S. about freedom of expression, ownership of media, the structure of networks, regulation, secrecy, privacy and intellectual property.

Starr writes frankly about the sordid history of repression, book burning and censorship in our country. One sees striking parallels in the book to such current topics as the USA Patriot Act, FCC licensing procedures and the media role in political campaigns.

Starr demonstrates how patterns were set in the 19th Century, when the U.S. chose to privatize telephones and telegraph, while Britain and most of Europe preferred public or state ownership.

Russia provides an extreme example of the influence of state interests in control on decisions about technological systems. Starr notes that in 1991, when the Soviet Union was dissolved, that country had fewer telephones than the nations of the West. The Soviet regime had instead invested in loudspeakers, which “allowed the state to communicate with the people” but not the other way round.

A few other interesting or surprising nuggets:

- In 1889, New York had 55 daily newspapers.
- Originally, the U.S. did not dominate international film production – before World War I, the leading role belonged to France.
- In the late 1920s, squeamish bosses of radio networks and stations barred commercials for such products as deodorants and laxatives.

Some readers may be scared off by the density and scholarly character of the book and its voluminous endnotes (67 pages). But they will be rewarded by lively writing and sharp analysis.

If we have one major criticism, it is that the work appears to end abruptly at the beginning of World War II, thus virtually cutting off the history of television, not to mention the advent of the Internet.

However, one has to admire Starr's erudite history of communications and journalism as far as it goes. Best of all, we applaud his dedication to understanding media as a safeguard for American democracy.

Bernard S. Redmont, a frequent contributor to *Television Quarterly*, is Dean Emeritus of Boston University College of Communication, and served as a correspondent for CBS News and other media outlets. He is the author of *Risks Worth Taking, The Odyssey of a Foreign Correspondent*.

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### Casualty of War: The Bush Administration's Assault on a Free Press

by David Dadge

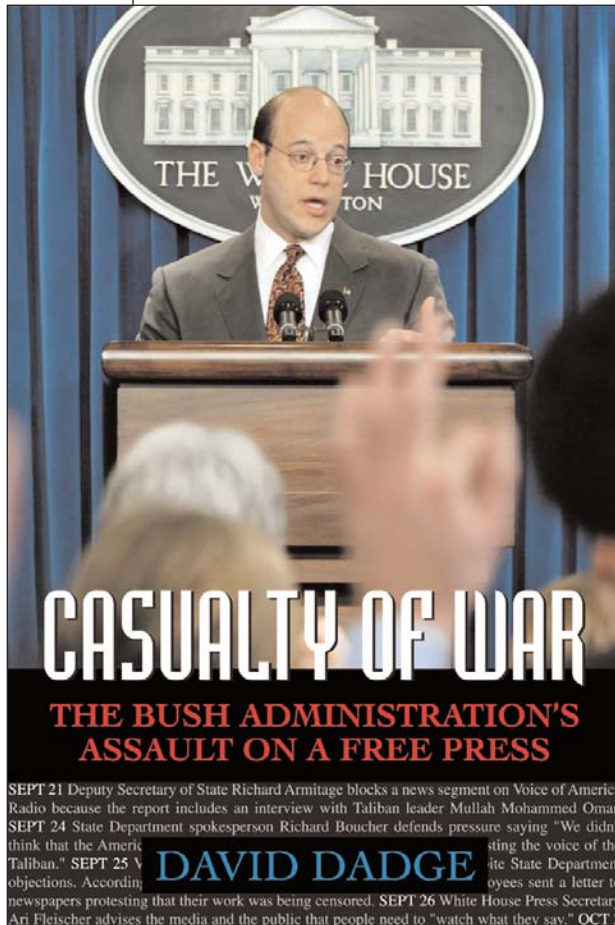
*Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY*  
(330 pages, \$26)

By **Ralph Engelman**

**D**avid Dadge, editor of the International Press Institute based in Vienna, Austria, makes a powerful case that 9/11 precipitated a world-wide crisis for freedom of the press. He laments the emergence of a "second front" against human rights as a by-product of the war on terrorism, a development he attributes in large measure to the misguided policies of the Bush administration.

The author of *Casualty of War* effectively uses the case-study approach to illustrate his thesis. For example, in examining pressure placed on American media by the Bush administration, he describes the repercussions of Condoleeza Rice's conference call on October 10, 2001 to executives of the major network news departments and the cable news channels. Dadge criticizes the executives for reaching a joint agreement

to engage in self-censorship, referring to an internal CNN directive designed to temper any critical coverage of the war in Afghanistan as "one of the most abject statements ever handed down to the news staff of a television organization." He notes the appearance of flags in anchor lapels and graphics in television news, and the patriotic declarations of Dan Rather, among others. Dadge also chronicles the Bush Administration's ill-fated attempt to create an Office of Strategic Influence to spread disinformation, its attack on the Freedom of Information Act, and the attempt to monopolize satellite images.



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He is one of surprisingly few to raise the question of the propriety of Secretary of State Colin Powell's son Michael chairing the FCC. In general, Dadge accuses the Bush administration of creating a "censorial atmosphere" at home conducive to the jingoism of Fox News Channel but hostile to independent or critical reporting and to the free flow of information.

Dadge also singles out what he considers counterproductive information policies of the Bush administration in the international arena. He gives a detailed account of the attempt in September 2001 to censor an interview of Mullah Omar on the Voice of America (VOA). The attempt at censorship ultimately failed, but not before it caused a shakeup, demoralized the staff and had a chilling effect on journalistic independence at VOA. Dadge also criticizes the Bush Administration's attacks on Al-Jazeera, and its attempts to censor it through pressure on Sheikh Hamad of Qatar, as ineffective and self-defeating. Such actions, the author argues, weaken U.S. credibility and its quest to win hearts and minds in the Arab world. Moreover, Dadge suggests that the media policies of the Bush Administration, especially its attempts to harness the domestic press for its own purposes, put American journalists abroad at greater risk as targets of anti-American sentiment.

**T**he most original – and disturbing – section of *Casualty of War* consists of documentation of how 9/11 has had a chilling effect on press freedom and human rights throughout the world. Dadge posits that the geopolitics of the

war on terror has led the U.S. to ignore violations of basic freedoms by its strategic partners. Furthermore, foreign regimes tarnish their opponents as terrorists both to justify repressive measures and to appeal for aid from the U.S.

Here Dadge provides a broad panorama of how anti-terrorism has replaced anti-communism as a rationale for anti-democratic practices. He writes how Russia denies basic liberties and commits abuses in Chechnya while linking its independence movement to Al Qaeda. The former Soviet Republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan exploited their proximity to Afghanistan in the war against the Taliban to get foreign aid from the U.S. while increasing their restrictions on the press and human rights. A chief U.S. ally, General Musharraf of Pakistan, is a dictator who muzzles the press, which was excluded from the trial of Daniel Pearl's murderer. China, which has extremely restrictive press policies, has invoked the terrorist threat, claiming that Osama bin Laden is aiding the separatists in Xinjiang. Dadge identifies this pattern throughout much of the world: "From Benin to Zimbabwe and from Egypt to Uganda countries have used the war on terrorism to attack the media." Europe is no exception. Dadge reports how the European Union enacted legislation empowering member states to give police, intelligence and customs officials greater access to the communications of journalists and ordinary citizens. Definitions of terrorism were broadened so that they could cover protests over the environment and globalization.

Dadge notes the proclamations

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addressing the problems presented in *Casualty of War* by various inter-governmental organizations, NGOs and other bodies he collectively refers to as the “press freedom community.” He echoes calls for expansion of freedom of information legislation in the world. He insists that in the final analysis the free flow of information will aid, not hinder, the war on terrorism. We are encouraged to investigate the root causes of terrorism, and to resist the impulse to shoot the messenger. However, the author provides little in the way of strategy or hope to reverse what he characterizes as a worldwide assault on a free press by the Bush Administration.

Some caveats. *Casualty of War*, which provides a wealth of information, unfortunately lacks an index. The book is redundant in places. A general discussion of human-rights issues at times broadens the scope of the book, but blurs the focus on the press as indicated in its title. The almost exclusive emphasis on Bush Administration policy obscures another

factor: the structural problem of concentration in the communications field, the power of a handful of conglomerates to control the flow of information in the world that makes it possible for the Bush Administration to implement its media agenda.

The book inevitably suffers as well from the rush of events. Apparently written in the aftermath of 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan, Dadge is unable to discuss important issues regarding the Iraq war, among them the failure of the press to take a harder look at initial claims of the existence of weapons of mass destruction and, once the war began, the use of embedded reporters as part of the military’s news management strategy. Nor can Dadge reflect on the role of the press in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.

These reservations and limitations notwithstanding, David Dadge has written an invaluable book placing the problem of a free press in the post 9/11 environment in a global setting.

Ralph Engelman is Professor of Journalism at the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University. He is coordinator of the annual George Polk Awards Seminar, and also serves as journalism consultant to the *Interactive Encyclopedia of Television* of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Foundation. He is the author of *Public Radio and Television in America: A Political History* (Sage, 1996).

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### Edward R. Murrow and the Birth of Broadcast Television

By Bob Edwards

Wiley, New York  
(192 pages, \$19.99)

By Greg Vitiello

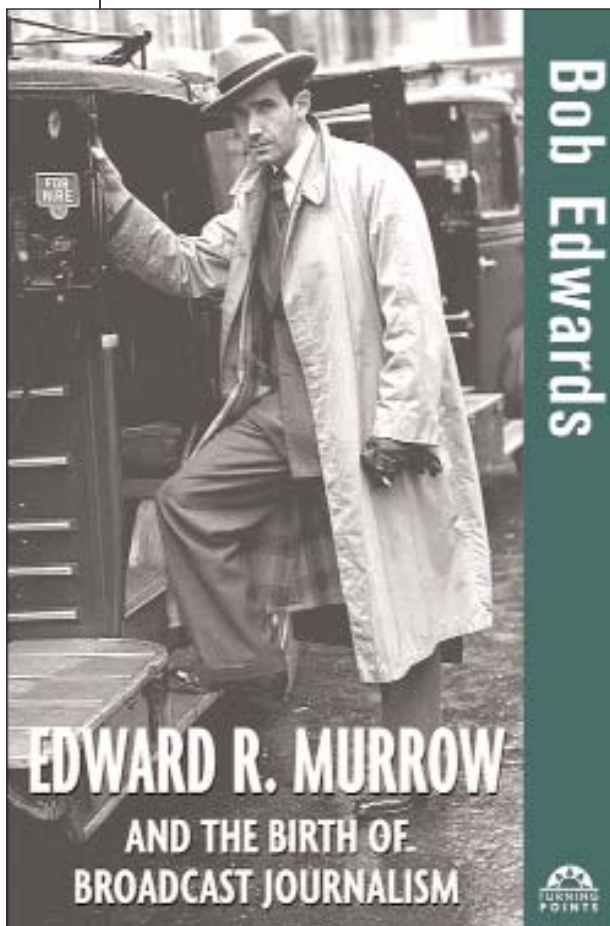
**W**ith his craggy face, impeccable grooming, and imperial bearing, Edward R.

Murrow was a riveting figure both on camera and on the street. The deliberate, resonant voice and thought-provoking message were even more riveting, whether he spoke from a London rooftop alight with Nazi bombs or in a TV studio crowded with monitors, cameras and wires. There was simply no one like him – no one with greater weight, conviction or ability to shape his medium, whether on radio or on television.

Murrow's blend of charisma and substance has already been the subject of several books, including excellent biographies by Alexander Kendrick, Joseph E. Persico and A.M. Sperber. In his new book, *Edward R. Murrow and the Birth of Broadcast Journalism*, veteran radio journalist Bob Edwards narrows his focus to Murrow, the pioneer, innovator and

“patron saint” of broadcast journalism.

Edwards singles out several prototypical events that shine their light on Murrow the pioneer. One of the best moments, in a chapter titled “Anschluss,” traces CBS's broadcast of Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938. We see Murrow leasing a 27-seat Lufthansa airliner and flying to Vienna as its sole passenger to link up with a broadcast team that included William L. Shirer from London and other correspondents in Paris, Berlin and Rome. We hear Murrow commenting on the Austrian accommodation to Hitler's rule: “They lift the right arm a little higher here than



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in Berlin and the 'Heil Hitler' is said a little more loudly." Edwards sums up: "Murrow, Shirer, and company had just devised and executed what became the routine format for the presentation of news. It not only had multiple points of origin, it also had included both reporting and analysis of breaking news, and was both a journalistic and a technological breakthrough for broadcasting."

Murrow did more. He recruited many of the best broadcast journalists (known fondly as "Murrow's Boys"), infused them with his reporting fervor, and brought reality, perspective, drama – and sometimes shock – into the nation's living rooms. Nothing could match the shock, despite Murrow's measured restraint, of his report from Buchenwald. And he was never more dramatic than when he reported from the cockpit of a British plane during its bombing mission over Berlin.

Edwards, like an orchestra conductor teaming up with a virtuosic soloist, lets us hear many of Murrow's greatest moments without intrusion. On the bombing mission, Murrow reports: "Berlin was a kind of orchestrated hell, a terrible symphony of light and flame. It isn't a pleasant kind of warfare – the men doing it speak of it as a job... The job isn't pleasant; it's terribly tiring. Men die in the sky while others are roasted alive in their cellars..."

When Edwards moves from the radio to the television years, we miss some of Murrow's dramatic flair and crusading zeal. Murrow's courageous, unforgettable coverage of McCarthyism and its eponymous subject, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, is given almost perfunctory

treatment. Edwards touches the issues but misses the drama except when he quotes at length from Murrow's closing speech in the "Report on Senator McCarthy": "...the line between investigator and persecutor is a very fine one, and the junior senator from Wisconsin has stepped over it repeatedly... We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine and remember that we are not descended from fearful men, not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate, and to defend causes which were for the moment unpopular."

After the broadcast, Edwards reports, "Public reaction ran overwhelmingly in Ed Murrow's favor, but a far more important result from the broadcast was the transformation of political discussion."

Fair enough. Edwards captures the significance of Murrow's confrontation with McCarthy. What I miss is the passion that Persico expresses when he writes, "I was drawn not only by what Murrow did, but how skillfully he did it. What he managed in the course of a half hour was virtually to have McCarthy stand before millions of Americans, place a rope woven of his own demagoguery around his neck, and hang himself."

On Murrow the pioneer, Edwards writes, "he moved television beyond its function as a headline service and established it as an original news source." Edwards also credits Murrow with introducing techniques still in use today,

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such as the split-screen interview. Furthermore, Murrow “gave broadcast journalism a set of standards that matched those of the best newspapers in terms of what stories to cover and how to cover them.”

Sadly, Edwards informs us, those standards no longer pertain to profit-hungry commercial television. The profit mentality helped to drive Murrow from CBS in the 1960s after the network killed his pioneering series, *See It Now*. Today, Edwards argues, that mentality is so prevalent that Murrow could not – or would not – work in the medium. In the book’s final pages, Edwards summons his most potent arguments against “corporate bean counters,” “tabloid sensationalism,” the timidity of public

broadcasting, and the “obsessive total coverage” of cable TV.

Edwards is equally dismissive about commercial radio’s virtual abandonment of substantive news commentary. News, as Murrow practiced it, is left to public radio – the arena in which Edwards experienced his own disappointment by being removed as host of NPR’s *Morning Edition* after 25 years.

Would Murrow have foiled them all as he did on that day in 1938 when he flew into Vienna and damned Nazism from its own cradle? I wonder. Edwards prefers a valedictory ending, consoling us that “we had Murrow when we needed him most – at the beginning of broadcast journalism.”

A frequent contributor to *Television Quarterly*, Greg Vitiello has written about Ed Murrow’s famed McCarthy program and is the author of the article about the New York City Marathon in this issue.

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### Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture

By Heather Hendershot

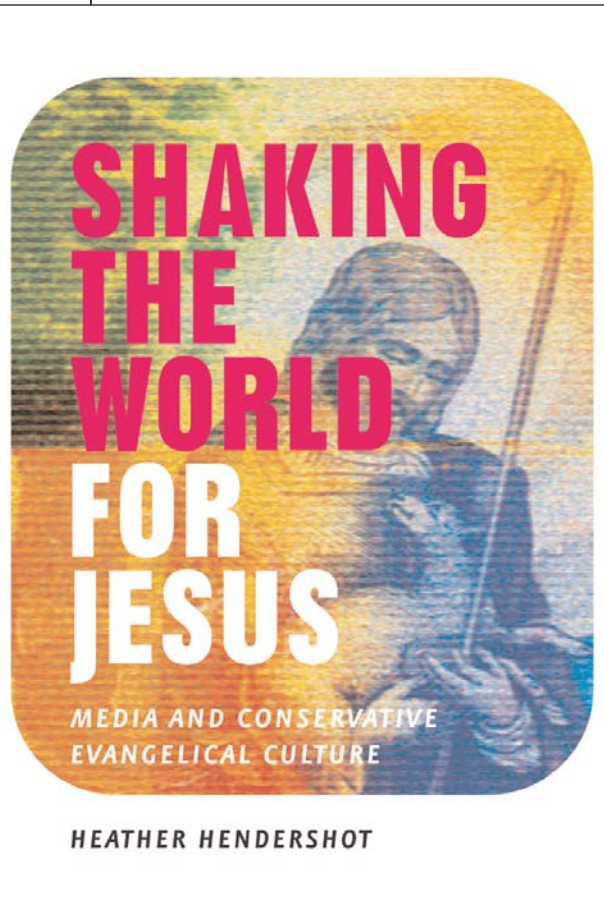
*The University of Chicago Press,  
Chicago, Illinois*  
(256 pages, \$27.50)

By Ron Simon

**C**ontrary to the supposed cultural and religious wars inflaming the nation, a recent study by Princeton University found that there is now increasing agreement between the evangelical born-again and the mainstream Protestant establishment. In fact, the conservative evangelicals are not that stubbornly conservative; many have become more freethinking on such issues as race and gender roles. These findings might surprise many whose image of that new ol' time religion is Reverend Jerry Falwell outing Tinky-Winky, the purple creature from the children's series *Teletubbies*. Certainly, this "one nation" news would not shock Heather Hendershot, an associate professor in the media studies department at Queens College, who has just written a compelling and enlightening

book on how evangelicals have been using popular culture for many years to market their spiritual message. Her book, *Shaking the World for Jesus*, overturns many of the assumptions and stereotypes that non-believers have of the movement, which is indeed having a growing engagement with life in the 21st century.

Since the dawning of the mass media, evangelicals have been making use of every means of communication. Hendershot points out that the evangelicals – an amorphous culture of witnesses who have declared Jesus their own person savior – are very distinct



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from the fundamentalists who adamantly draw distinctions between the believers and the outside world, making them much more suspicious of contemporary culture. Evangelicals have been embracing of the latest technologies since radio, and their messages have been carried on film, video and now the Internet. Even with such a long and prolific history, few scholars have paid critical attention. Hendershot comes to the academic rescue, not to pass judgements nor make snide, ironic comments, but to illuminate a significant, but relatively unknown arena of religious culture. After 9/11, there was an onslaught of books about Islam. I would suspect that the sophisticated secularist from the American metropolis now knows more about the Sunnis and Shiites than about the homegrown born agians.

Hendershot says from the onset that these Christian cultural products are not an overt form of propaganda, a position that allows her to begin an intellectual journey to discover what is being communicated. Resisting the easy “propaganda paradigm,” she delves into the more subtle meanings of the works as well as the industrial history and process of Christian media. For example, one of the most successful evangelical ventures targeting children is the animated series *VeggieTales*, starring Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber. The series addresses family issues for children three to ten years old, presenting a benevolent view of God’s power, but nowhere mentioning Jesus, something unheard of in old school evangelicalism. Consequently, the program has succeeded in the mainstream

marketplace, even leading to the release of a feature film. The program is decidedly wholesome, promoting such values as compassion and forgiveness, but would not alienate mainstream parents. For Hendershot, *VeggieTales* demonstrates that the potentiality of Christian media to cross over, speaking to and entertaining nonbelievers.

Hendershot finds that the discourse of the evangelicals has changed over the years. The evangelical movement was once very suspicious of psychology and therapeutic techniques that promised to heal the soul, something only that Jesus the Savior could do. As they accommodated to modernity and psychiatric concepts, evangelicals had adopted many familiar buzzwords from secular culture: feelings, anxiety, self-esteem. No longer is there a total reliance on sin to explain man’s setbacks and failure. This absorption of therapeutic rhetoric has allowed evangelical books to be competitive in the publishing marketplace and make this particular Christian lifestyle less forbidding. The evangelicals have also adjusted they way they speak to teens. Hendershot notes how chastity has been repackaged for secular audiences with a more neutral word, abstinence. With this campaign the evangelicals have brought the old morality into public discussion without the anti-sex and anti-safe-sex diatribes of the original movement. This word substitution has had political ramifications as well. The Welfare Reform Act in 1996 provided 50 million dollars per year for abstinence education, legislation for which the conservative Christian community takes credit.

During her research Hendershot

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discovered an audiovisual auteur, Irwin S. Moon, whom she calls a “maverick Christian filmmaker.” From 1945 to 1962 Moon supervised the production of thirty films that were produced and distributed outside the traditional Hollywood system. The programs were seen by millions in schools and churches, syndicated on television, and played very well in the burgeoning international market. Moon recognized that the best way to reach a new audience was not with Bible thumping harangues, but films that explored the wonders of science. Such films as *God of Creation* offered arresting visual images of nature in full bloom and asked viewers to open their eyes and see God as a designer or architect. Moon helped set the template for filmmakers who want to remain “in the world but not of the world,” relying on logic and reason to understand God’s plan for salvation. Today’s Christian filmmakers, many working in fictional apocalyptic genres, still struggle with Moon’s dilemma: how to strike a correct balance between Biblical instruction and pure entertainment.

Hendershot has included one chapter that will surely provoke discussion. Instead of concentrating solely on the evangelical movement, she examines the growth and media message of the Cathedral of Hope, the world’s largest gay and lesbian church. Many members of this church located in Dallas were raised in the fundamentalist tradition and, after rejecting its reactionary understanding of sexuality, still have a deep belief in the Bible. Hendershot shows how this postfundamentalist church both defines itself against Christian conservatism while incorporating elements of that

culture into its liturgy and outreach. Like evangelicalism, the Cathedral of Hope seeks new converts by reworking secular forms.

Since the writing of *Shaking the World for Jesus*, Christian culture has erupted into popular consciousness. Instead of being Mel Gibson’s Folly, *The Passion of the Christ* has become one of the most financially successful films of all time. *Joan of Arcadia*, about a contemporary girl who listens to God in different guises, is one of the most popular new series of the television season while Christian merchandise sells more than four billion dollars a year at such retailers as Wal-Mart and Target. Jesus has never been hotter at the box office and the cash register. But what does this all mean? Heather Hendershot’s book is essential reading to understand this new phenomenon and how Christian evangelicals are negotiating their way in a secular American marketplace, attempting to appeal to believers and nonbelievers alike.

Ron Simon is curator of television at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York and an associate professor at Columbia University and NYU.

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### Spy Television

By Wesley Britton

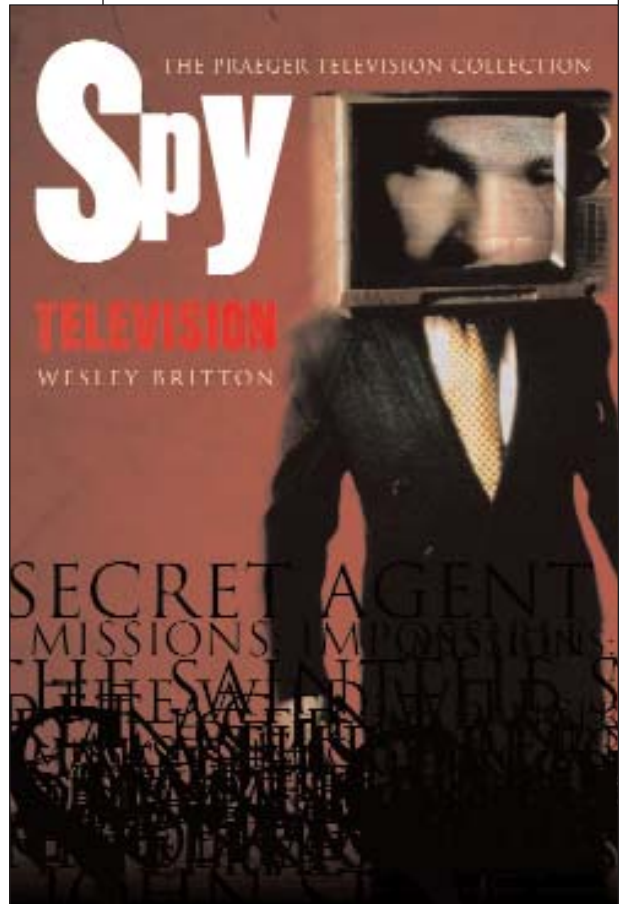
*Praeger, Westport, CT*  
(272 pages, \$39.95)

By Paul Noble

It's no wonder that television series about spies, secret agents and the intelligence community are popular. The entertainment value of these programs is always reflected in daily news reports. Throughout the history of *Spy Television*, art imitated life imitated art. And this pattern appears to be accelerating each day.

While reading Wesley Britton's *Spy Television*, I learned, from television and newspapers, about an international "spy shortage." I was already aware, as we all were, of the monstrous intelligence gap which led to "9/11." The in-fighting between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation is a reality which has had disastrous consequences for our nation and for the world. Abuse of enemy prisoners (torture, depending on whom one listens to) to extract important intelligence is a major 2004 campaign issue. There was the *New York Times*' admission that the "intelligence" it received colored its reporting

of the pre-Iraqi war period and the war itself. The rise of international terrorism, not only between or among nations, but based upon smaller, possibly but not necessarily government-sponsored cadres, cults and other hard-to-pinpoint organizations, has made intelligence-gathering more complex than ever. Viewers of spy television, of course, knew all that years ago, thanks to the delightful and successful programs described in great detail in Wesley Britton's book, which is one volume in the Praeger Television Collection, a series edited by television columnist



## REVIEW AND COMMENT

David Bianculli.

Spy novels, movies and radio programs have a long history. John Buchan, Graham Greene and Eric Ambler were spy novel writers who set the standard and provided the model, especially in the twenties and thirties. In 1935, film director Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*, an adaptation of a Buchan novel, is the first of the spy movies many of us recall, and Hitchcock continued in this genre, with *The Lady Vanishes*, *Foreign Correspondent*, and *Saboteur*, topping those thrillers in the fifties with his sensational *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *North By Northwest*.

Ian Fleming's creation of James Bond in the nineteen-fifties set the stage for the memorable 007 movie series, which spawned the television spy series celebrated in Britton's book. The "free world" was battling against the forces behind the Iron Curtain, and Fleming tapped our curiosity about the behind-the-scenes activities which could spell life-or-death, including nuclear holocaust. According to Mr. Britton, "U. S. President John F. Kennedy listed *From Russia With Love* as one of his favorite novels in a 1961 *Life* magazine article." The impact of JFK's taste in 007 novels was felt everywhere, in the success of the Bond movies beginning with *Dr. No* and in the TV series which tried to replicate or spoof the phenomenon.

*The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* was the first major network response to the Bond series. It premiered in the fall of 1964. Oscar-nominee Robert Vaughn, Scottish-born featured player David McCallum and five-time Hitchcock character actor Leo G. Carroll took the roles of Napoleon Solo, Illya Kuryakin,

and Alexander Waverly, the agents of the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement. They fought against the forces of THRUSH, which Britton describes as "the blueprint for all fictional power-hungry organizations to follow on the small screen." Bond's SPECTRE, U.N.C.L.E.'s THRUSH and the real world's Al-Qaeda – just one potent example of Spy Television's predictive arts.

The influence of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* extended far beyond *Spy Television*. The team-casting, the non-conforming fictional heroes, the "cool" nature and elegance of intelligent agents set the pattern for many other series, from *Starsky and Hutch* to *Scarecrow and Mrs. King*. After the events of September 11, 2001, renewed interest in *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* grew because of the organization's fictional blueprint for the new war against terror.

It was the British production – and exportation – of *The Avengers* which had an even more long-lasting impact on *Spy Television*. Patrick Macnee as Major John Steed and Diana Rigg as Mrs. Emma Peel continue in reruns for 40 years. Other *Avengers* characters, portrayed by Ian Hendry, Honor Blackman, and Linda Thorson, added their indelible presence to the proceedings, which tended to deal with smugglers, radar jamming, assassins, and, occasionally, the supernatural. Race and politics was treated humorously rather than seriously. Early plot lines such as a rustic English setting threatened by technological invasion morphed in later years to contemporary problems such as drugs and urban problems.

## REVIEW AND COMMENT

*Get Smart* and *Mission: Impossible* were two giants of the genre in the sixties, one a hilarious spoof and the other a fast-moving team-driven thriller. CONTROL agents Don Adams and Barbara Feldon as Maxwell Smart (agent 86) and Susan Hilton (agent 99) fought KAOS, an international terror organization. “*Get Smart* combined slapstick, black comedy, social commentary, and wit served up by some of the best talents in the business,” writes Britton. The credits of *Get Smart* read like a who’s who of the Borscht Belt and the days of Sid Caesar, *M\*A\*S\*H*, *That Was the Week that Was*, and *The Steve Allen Show*. Dan Melnick, Leonard Stern, Buck Henry and Mel Brooks were responsible for the hilarious concept and episodes.

*Mission: Impossible*, with its team approach to intelligence, lived on in reruns for generations. Martin Landau, Barbara Bain, Greg Morris, Peter Lupus and Peter Graves, and, later, Leonard Nimoy, Sam Elliot and Lesley Ann Warren, continued on into the seventies.

What Britton adds to our understanding of the role of *Spy Television*:

**1** He links the birth of Spy Television in the fifties in two directions, to the spy novels and films of the thirties and forties, and ahead to the more contemporary series like *The X-Files*, *The A-Team*, *La Femme Nikita*, *The Agency*, *Alias* and *24*.

**2** He provides a clear description of the development process of dozens of series, showing how concept, writing, casting, and directing

contributed to the creation of the program and then its modification during each telecast season.

**3** He demonstrates the series’ impacts on future programs created by the same personnel.

**4** His writing, while clearly that of a genre fan, is restrained rather than cheerleading, offering both casual and already-informed readers an intense study of the programs.

Last, but not least, the book is an informal catalog of the catch-phrases and fashions of Spy Television with which we are all familiar, and may use to this day. Britton has lifted the cone of silence on espionage, accepted his mission with his tape self-destructing in five seconds, and stands for “the forces of goodness, virtue, and justice. As Emma Peel (Diana Rigg) said in her farewell to Patrick Macnee, “always keep your bowler on in times of stress. Watch out for diabolical masterminds. Good-bye, Steed.”

Recently retired as vice-president of film acquisitions and scheduling at Lifetime Television, Paul Noble is chairman of the public-relations committee of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and a board member of the New York chapter.

## Crazy Like a FOX: The Inside Story of How Fox News Beat CNN

By Scott Collins

*Portfolio, New York*  
(228 pages, \$24.95)

By Michael J. Jordan

It was late 2000, and a polarized American electorate was almost evenly split. This had been reflected in the presidential vote, but now also in how Americans viewed efforts to resolve the crisis – each side accused the other of electoral theft.

As Scott Collins writes in *Crazy Like a Fox: The Inside Story of How Fox News Beat CNN*, conservatives registered such disgust with events that more of them turned to the network that seemed to ratify their viewpoint – Fox News Channel.

“I think what’s going on is the Democratic lawyers have flooded Florida,” Fox News anchor John Gibson said on the air. “They are afraid of George W. Bush becoming president and instituting tort reform and their gravy train will be over. This is the trial association’s full court press to make sure Bush does not win.”

Such election coverage catapulted Fox ahead of MSNBC for the first time, and the upstart network was now nipping at the heels of mighty CNN. The final hurdle over

CNN came soon after the 9/11 attacks and would be cemented during Gulf War II. All of which was infused by Fox’s open embrace of patriotism-tinted news, famously embodied by the undulating American flag placed over Fox’s on-screen logo. Rupert Murdoch, who had often branded CNN as “too liberal,” had indeed found the right person to guide Fox, Roger Ailes. And Ailes, a former media adviser to presidents Nixon, Reagan and the elder Bush, made no apologies for rewriting the rules of broadcast news.

“There’s a whole country that elitists will never acknowledge,” Ailes is quoted as saying. “What people deeply resent out there are those in the ‘blue’ states

## The Inside Story of How Fox News Beat CNN

*Crazy like a*

# FOX



Scott  
Collins

thinking they're smarter. There's a touch of that [resentment] in our news."

With central characters like Ailes, Collins has written an entertaining, personality-driven account that breathes life into a topic that could instead resemble the dry score-keeping of industry mergers and acquisitions that marks some financial writing. Rather, Collins engagingly profiles the people and events, decisions and trends that enabled Fox to upend CNN as cable news champ in less than six years.

"The story of the cable news wars involves seized opportunities and failed strategies, corporate arrogance and executive intrigue, intense battles for ratings, advertising, and multimillion dollar anchors," writes Collins, a media reporter for the Los Angeles *Times*. "And the surprising outcome of this unlikely battle has changed the way Americans get – and use – the news."

Curiously, given the book's title, Collins actually raises the curtain with the December 1995 launch of MSNBC, the highly anticipated joint venture of heavy-hitters Microsoft and NBC. Yet the third cable news network struggled from the get-go to establish its own identity, and today languishes well behind the Big Two.

But Collins has introduced MSNBC as a cautionary tale, to highlight what becomes a central theme to the book – that hard-charging, Type-A personalities with grandiose plans and deep pockets backing them are equally likely to fail in the heated, crowded competition to win over fickle television viewers.

Collins is indeed shrewd in spotting metaphors. He tells the tale of Fox's Paula Zahn and CNN's Greta Van Susteren, for example, not to gossip about how Ailes compared Zahn to a "dead raccoon" when

he fired her, or how aggrieved Van Susteren was over a chair, but to underscore how celebrity-driven cable news had become, with multi-million-dollar anchors. Some two decades earlier, in 1980, Ted Turner had pronounced that "news was the star" and launched his no-frills CNN with a handful of steady veterans and scores of lowly paid, recent college graduates.

**B**ut personalities on television have become a reality, and so, too, are they essential to this book. While *Crazy Like a Fox* boils down to the battle between Fox and CNN – floundering MSNBC becomes something of a distraction from the main event – the undercard features fascinating matchups: Turner v. Murdoch, Ailes v. most everybody, GE's Jack Welch v. Bill Gates. Time Warner's Gerald Levin, NBC President Bob Wright, CNN President Tom Johnson, Fox host Bill O'Reilly and others also scuffle.

Collins offers a fly-on-the-wall perspective that allows readers to eavesdrop on boardroom and newsroom exchanges he presumably captured through interviews and cross-referencing. This is not unauthorized biography, as in the acknowledgments he thanks almost all the major players for their time, recollections and insights.

So, how did Fox beat CNN (for now, at least)? As Collins illustrates, it's too simplistic to say Fox exploited the notion of "liberal bias" – a critique first articulated in Edith Efron's *The News Twisters* (1971) – or pounced early on the red state-blue state trend. Whether media bias is real or perceived is still a source of fierce debate, of course. But there is a very real sense among many that mainstream media disrespect

conservative sensibilities and issues. Fox executives admit to Collins that they tap this anger.

Fox, however, also needed to maneuver to gain access into markets and onto cable systems, before it could begin winning over hearts and minds. And while Fox drives home a clear editorial slant, the network has also benefited from CNN's corporate inertia, managerial turnover, and erosion of its popularity – fueled by its infamous 1998 Tailwind report, in which CNN asserted that US forces used nerve gas against American defectors in Laos in September 1970, only to later retract the story.

Overall, Collins is remarkably “fair and balanced” in writing about a network that claims to do so, but whose executives concede in revealing quotes that they are actually correcting an existing “imbalance” by providing a counterweight.

Since 9/11, “Fox decided that it was going to take sides, giving ‘fair and balanced’ an elastic meaning,” Collins writes. “This was not a war but our war.”

In reading how Fox rose to the top, one can't help but wonder: to what effect?

The so-called “Fox effect” or “Foxification” of TV news has caused much hand-wringing among news purists and liberals. And as Collins writes, “Where television news once only presumed to cover political warfare, it now feeds it.”

But there's more: how does it affect the audience?

A widely reported October 2003 survey by the Program of International Policy Attitudes suggested that 80 percent of Fox viewers believed one of three following misperceptions: the U.S. had uncovered evidence demonstrating a

close working relationship between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda; the U.S. had found the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; and most people in other countries had backed the U.S. war against Saddam. Forty-five percent of Fox viewers believed all three, by far the highest percentage of any group of TV viewers. Fox, wrote the survey's authors, “was the news source whose views had the most misperceptions.”

Then there was the documentary film released this summer, “Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism,” in which director Robert Greenwald alleges that arguments offered up by Fox anchors and commentators so closely mirror those of the Bush White House, it's as if they're reciting from the administration's talking points.

Whether this is less journalism than propaganda, and what potential harm is caused – say, helping to take the country into war – is probably best saved for another book. And Collins may be just the writer for the job.

The United Nations correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*, Michael J. Jordan is a Brooklyn-based freelance journalist specializing in international affairs and an associate adjunct professor of journalism at Long Island University.

## The Fourth Network: How Fox Broke the Rules and Reinvented Television

By Daniel M. Kimmel

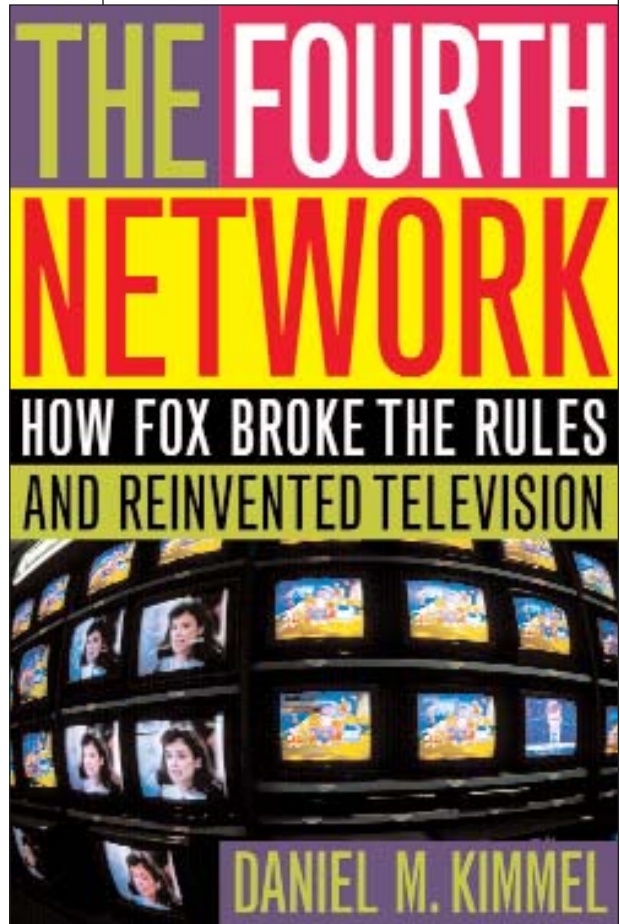
*Ivan R. Dee, Chicago*  
(320 pages, \$27.50)

By Jimmie L. Reeves

**A**lison Picard's evaluation of Kimmel's book in *Publishers Weekly* concludes with a statement that serves as a nice opening for this review: "This is a solid but rather dry account of a network and its impact on TV." In fact, "solid" and "dry" are apt descriptions of *The Fourth Network: How Fox Broke the Rules and Reinvented Television*. But, unlike Picard, I do not consider the arid quality of Kimmel's work to be a negative. Dryness, after all, can be a good thing. Consider wine, for instance. Or diapers. And as a scholar of television who regularly teaches a course in broadcast programming, I savor the exquisite dryness of Kimmel's documentation of the birth, childhood and adolescence of the Fox Network.

Indeed (especially given the overstatement in the book's subtitle), I was pleasantly surprised to find that Kimmel's prose is relatively free of the wet hyperbole that floods typical accounts of the launching of successful media

enterprises. Here, Hank Whittemore's fawning *CNN: The Inside Story* comes to mind. But, of course, Whittemore's "authorized" history of the early years of the world's first all-news network was made, ironically, both more and less credible by his status as a CNN insider. In contrast, Kimmel's reserved and balanced treatment of the Fox record is at least partially attributable to his outsider status. This status elevates the truth-value of Kimmel's words – but, again ironically, it is also responsible for hampering his ability to gain access to key players still employed by the media group. As Kimmel decries (and rightly so) in his Acknowledgements, the Murdoch empire's refusal to cooperate



with Kimmel stands as a ringing indictment of the current wave of media consolidation. Kimmel was told that “since News Corp. owned its own publishing division, they might choose to do their own story of the FOX network someday, so they saw no reason to help with a potentially competing product.” I share Kimmel’s righteous indignation when he argues that “The notion that FOX would consent to interviews only with an author working on an in-house book should be troubling not only to journalists, but to anyone who treasures the free flow of information.”

Maybe the in-house and “authorized” history of the Fox Network will be penned by Newt Gingrich? But whoever is assigned this public-relations/propaganda project is sure to render a “fair and balanced” account of the Fox experience that is as jingoistic and congratulatory as the Fox News Network’s coverage of the exploits of the Bush Administration. Rupert Murdoch, I imagine, will be accorded the kind of awe assigned to Der Führer in Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*).

Which brings me back to Picard’s use of the word “solid” in the *Publishers Weekly* review. Solid is an apt description because Kimmel presents a three-dimensional holograph-like image of Fox, not a one- or two-dimensional sketch. In other words, the book tells the Fox story from multiple perspectives. In this regard, Kimmel won me over with his prologue. In ten concise pages he manages to relate the history of failed attempts at establishing a fourth broadcast network, convey the difficulty of such an undertaking, and report the intrigue surrounding Murdoch’s acquisition of Metromedia, the station

group that would become the nucleus of the young Fox network.

The rest of the book is made up of 16 chapters divided into three parts.

The first part is titled “The Coat-Hanger Network,” which refers to NBC’s Brandon Tartikoff’s legendary dismissal of the upstart Fox. The nickname suggested that, because so many of Fox’s first affiliates were located on the UHF band, viewers would have to attach coat hangers to their antennas to receive its programming. Each of the seven chapters of Part I chronicles a season in the early life of the network – beginning with 1985-1986 and ending with 1991-1992.

This period was basically the Barry Diller era at Fox.

The second part of the book, titled “The Revolving Door,” refers to turmoil at the top of the network hierarchy in the years following Diller’s exit stage right. Again, each chapter, beginning with 1992-1993, considers a season in the flow of Fox programming. And it is “The Revolving Door” part of Kimmel’s book that Picard finds most problematic. Apparently Picard wanted Kimmel to inject more personality into his discussion of the scores of executives and programmers identified as temporary hires during this period. As Picard put it, “Innumerable executives and programmers, many of whom he has interviewed, are rarely displayed with any distinguishing characteristics (a notable exception is the colorful Barry Diller).”

But Picard’s evaluation is marred by an assumption worth challenging – that the executives of the post-Diller years at Fox actually possessed distinguishing characteristics.

After all, as an ilk, corporate

executives – in any industry – are not often rewarded for displaying individuality. Consider, for instance, the case of Bill Rancic. Remember Bill? He was one of the most forgettable of the so-called job candidates on *The Apprentice*. The other contenders who displayed even an ounce of “personality” (Troy McClain) or daring (Sam Solovey) or “color” (Kwame Jackson, Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth and Tammy Lee) were systematically eliminated by Donald “You’re Fired” Trump until the white-bread Rancic was the last suit standing.

The point is that deep pockets like Donald Trump, Ted Turner and Rupert Murdoch seek out innovators when they launch a new enterprise, whether it be skyscraper or television network. But architects, both of buildings and networks, are expendable once the edifice is complete. Reese Schonfeld, the “co-founder” of CNN, discovered this harsh truth when Turner sent him packing in 1982, a scant 24 months after the unveiling of the network that would later land the “Mouth of the South” on the cover of *Time* as the magazine’s “Man of the Year.” Barry Diller’s seven-year tenure at Fox (1985-1992) was over thrice as long as Reese Schonfeld’s time at CNN – but in the end, as Turner did with Schonfeld, Murdoch made it abundantly clear who was at the top of the corporate pecking order. In Diller’s words (as quoted in Kimmel’s book), “He [Murdoch] told me, not meanly or coldly, but just realistically, ‘There is in this company only one principal.’”

The juiciest passages in this “dry” book are associated with Kimmel’s discussion of the highs and lows of Fox programming – from Fox’s triumphant colonization of children’s programming (exemplified by the success of *The*

*Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*) to its disastrous adventures in the late-night fringe (that damaged the careers of both Joan Rivers and Chevy Chase). Want to learn how Terry Rakolta’s attack on *Married . . . with Children* was something of godsend to the fledging network? It is explained in Kimmel’s book. Want to know how Fox’s exploitation of *In Living Color* infuriated Keenen Ivory Wayans? It’s also addressed by Kimmel. Want to know why the axing of *America’s Most Wanted* was one of the shortest cancellations in network history – or why David Duchovny sued the network for rerunning *The X-Files* on FX? These “why” questions, too, are answered in the book.

The third part of the book, tagged “21st Century Fox,” only contains one chapter which speculates on the future of the network. For me, this part is anticlimactic and does not measure up to the quality of the rest of the book.

But, despite its unsatisfying ending, *The Fourth Network* still deserves a place on the shelf of any serious observer of the American media-industrial complex. Though Murdoch and Diller’s accomplishments pale in comparison to what Turner and his crew did with WTBS and CNN, or what Gerald Levin did with HBO, Kimmel does present a convincing case for recognizing Fox as a major force in the recent history of the television medium. Indeed, I intend to make Kimmel’s book required reading for students enrolled in my programming class.

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