

## REVIEW AND COMMENT

## A Shadow of Red: Communism and the Blacklist in Radio and Television

By David Everitt

*Ivan R. Dee, Chicago*

(432 pages, \$27.50)

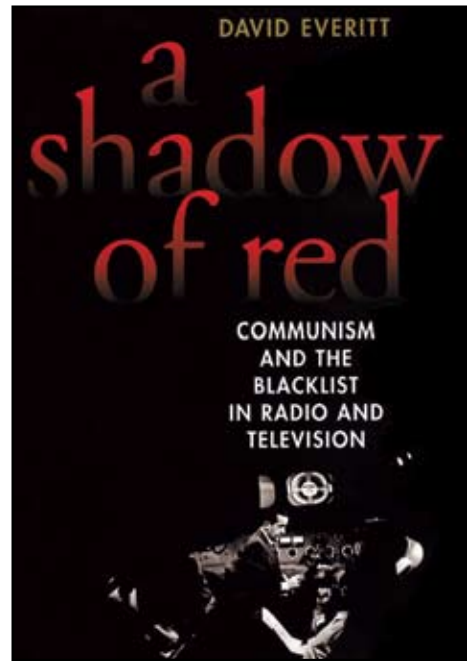
**By Bernard S. Redmont**

The United States in the 1950s suffered what historians consider a national nervous breakdown. It was called McCarthyism, the witch-hunting era, and the age of the blacklist.

Although it generally infected the political world and public and private life, nowhere was this pestilence more virulent than in the broadcast industry and in Hollywood.

Those were ugly times. Playwright Lillian Hellman dubbed the period “Scoundrel Time.” Most Americans born in the past half century have little knowledge of the hysteria, the totalitarian-like fear, and psychological terrorism unleashed by the inquisitors of the time under the pretext of anti-communism and the cold war.

The witch hunters cast a wide net. Many New Deal liberals were slandered as Reds. Victims were grilled by legislative committees, questioned about their beliefs, opinions and associations. Many were blacklisted, lost their livelihoods and their passports, fled into exile abroad, were jailed, committed suicide or died of heart attacks.



Caught in the grinding gears of the blacklist were many of the most prominent performers, writers and directors on radio and television—luminaries like Orson Welles, Edward G. Robinson, Gene Kelly, John Henry Faulk (the folksy talk show entertainer of the time on CBS), Lucille Ball (the star of TV’s most popular sitcom), veteran character actor Philip Loeb, the stripper turned writer-actress Gypsy Rose Lee, singer Hazel Scott, actor John Garfield, actress Judy Holliday, script writer Peter Lyon, comedian Zero Mostel, producer-writer-director Norman Corwin, children’s programming personality Irene Wicker, actor Everett Sloane, commentator Howard K. Smith and many others, well known or not.

Among the casualties of the blacklist were Loeb and CBS newsman Don Hollenbeck, both of whom committed suicide; actress Mady Christians, who

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died of a cerebral hemorrhage; and actors J. Edward Bromberg and Canada Lee, who died of heart attacks.

The media blacklist erupted in 1950, as the Korean war began. A booklet called *Red Channels* appeared, listing 151 suspected Communist sympathizers in broadcasting. A purge of the airwaves ensued. It involved some of broadcasting's top figures, including Edward R. Murrow and Frank Stanton of CBS. To appease the blacklists, the liberal-minded Murrow and Stanton went along with a CBS loyalty oath. FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover once told CBS held William S. Paley that the network might best be called the Communist Broadcasting System.

Once the heart of broadcast liberalism, CBS became the harshest of the networks in enforcing the blacklist. But Murrow also led the campaign against McCarthyism. Along with *Red Channels*, a newsletter called *Counterattack* joined the assault on candidates for the blacklist.

Author David Everitt tells the story in an unusual way in *A Shadow of Red*. He sees the blacklist as being instigated by five anti-Red watchdogs—three ex-FBI agents, a former naval intelligence officer and a grocer-supermarket magnate from Syracuse.

The ex-FBI agents, united in a hatred for Communism, were John C. Keenan, Kenneth M. Bierly and Theodore C. Kirkpatrick. They had worked together in the FBI's New York City Communist Squad before establishing an anti-Red company called American Business Consultants and launching the newsletter *Counterattack*.

The fourth man was a Syracuse grocer,

Laurence A. Johnson, who grew his business into a supermarket chain and whose passionate avocation was fighting Communism. He alerted his customers to boycott the sponsors of suspect radio and television personalities.

The fifth was Vincent Hartnett, a radio and magazine writer and former intelligence agent, who joined the three ex-FBI agents as a partner to help them build a data base. Hartnett wrote the seven page introduction to *Red Channels*. Religion played a role in the crusade. An ardent Catholic like two of the agents, he was so impassioned about his anti-Communist cause that he believed there was a blacklist against anti-Communists in radio.

Hartnett was the most prominent and most notorious of the broadcast Red hunters. He became a major anti-Red talent consultant for both sponsors and advertising agencies. He and others among the blacklists were accused by Jewish organizations of anti-Semitism. Hartnett published a typewritten, loose-leaf book entitled *Confidential Notebook (File 13)*, an updatable listing of broadcast personnel and their alleged front activities, more detailed than *Red Channels*. Perhaps in an effort to balance, Everitt writes sympathetically about Hartnett. This gives his work a confused and contradictory tone.

The book, oddly named *A Shadow of Red*, is not merely a scholarly history of the blacklist, filled as it is with reference notes on documents, personal correspondence, interviews and court transcripts. Yet, it is not the study one would have expected about this sordid era. Everitt seems to be ambivalent and ambiguous about the blacklist. He

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regards it as excessive, destructive and contrary to American values. But he does not see the blacklisters as “deluded hunters of an imaginary menace,” as the publisher’s book jacket puts it. He sometimes reads as if he agrees with the anti-Communist fervor of the blacklisters.

Everitt writes: “Too often the portrayals of these blacklisters have failed to rise above the depth of caricature, reducing them to little more than political bogeymen in a partisan political melodrama. Only by constructing a more complete picture of these people and their time can we understand how something like the blacklist could occur in a free society.”

Everitt’s publicity spokesmen make clear that he does not see the conflict in the broadcast media “as a simplistic morality tale of persecutors and the persecuted, or a witch hunt of right-wing fanatics hounding political innocents whom they insisted were agents of the Communist devil.”

About a quarter of the book is devoted to the libel suit filed against the blacklisters by John Henry Faulk. Faulk was a major star in broadcasting, not only as a talk show host but also on the syndicated TV show *Hee Haw*. He believed his career was damaged if not destroyed by accusations that he had Communist associations and sympathies. The suit was conducted by the flamboyant attorney Louis Nizer. Everitt covers the courtroom drama in great detail. Faulk’s victory with a hefty judgment against the blacklisters, the biggest an American jury ever awarded, was considered the beginning of the end of the blacklist.

Faulk later wrote a memoir called *Fear on Trial*. It was shown as a film and on TV. The author of the book, appears to doubt the veracity of Faulk’s anti-Communist protestations, and is clearly unsympathetic with his comportment.

A former magazine editor, Everitt writes frequently on entertainment and the media for *Entertainment Weekly*, *Biography*, *American History* and *The New York Times*. He is the author of *King of the Half Hour*.

Some other chronicles of the blacklist era have appeared that tell the story more incisively—Victor Navasky’s *Naming Names*, and John Cogley’s *Report on Blacklisting: II Radio-Television*, for example.

Could the Red Scare happen again? Everitt says no. He concedes that there have been parallels echoing some of the element of the blacklist period. After radical activist Danny Glover harshly criticized President Bush at the beginning of the Iraq War, conservative MSNBC commentator Joe Scarborough denounced the actor on the air and organized a protest among his viewers, demanding that Glover be fired as spokesman for the phone company MCI on its TV commercials. The campaign had its effect and Glover was fired. But unlike many blacklist victims of the 1950s, Glover continued to work regularly on TV and films. The same held true for other anti-war performers like Sean Penn. To date no organized blacklist has reappeared.

Everitt says in the end that the blacklist “remains a warning tale for other times of emergency and war, when emotional partisanship runs high on both sides and the temptation

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arises to silence the opposition or at the very least to unleash reckless conspiracy-mongering that poisons the public debate. On a more hopeful note, the blacklist period, like earlier times of drastic wartime measures, demonstrates the resiliency of the American system, its ability to correct itself and return to more levelheaded civil libertarian values. The question is, once polarization and emergency measures take hold, how long does it take the country to recover? Once the political fabric has been shredded, how quickly can it mend itself?"

*Bernard S. Redmont, a survivor of the 1950s blacklist, went on to report for Westinghouse Broadcasting Company Group W and CBS News. He became dean of Boston University's College of Communication and the author of Risks Worth Taking: The Odyssey of a Foreign Correspondent.*

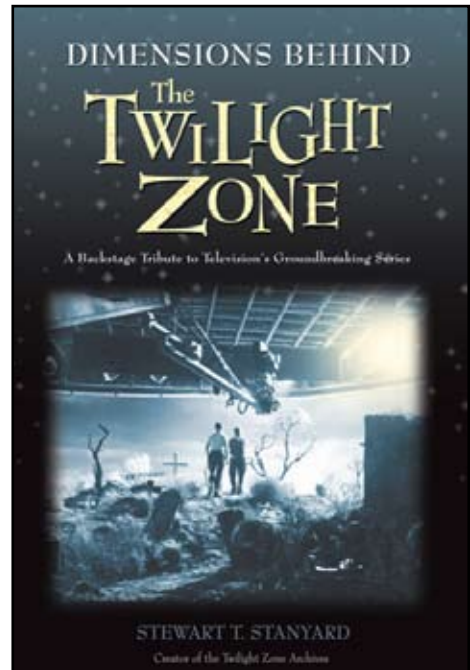
### Dimensions Behind: The Twilight Zone

By Stewart T. Stanyard  
ECW Press, Toronto  
(292 pages, \$21.95)

By John V. Pavlik

Books about *The Twilight Zone* are abundant and vary widely in quality. Stewart T. Stanyard's 2007 book, *Dimensions Behind The Twilight Zone* is a welcome addition to this collection of work. Stanyard's book provides a

detailed examination of the scenes and people behind the production of the classic show. Stanyard is a lifelong fan of the show, and spent years poring over archives about the production of the Emmy award-winning program. The book is as much a tribute to Rod Serling, *The Twilight Zone's* creator, as it is to the show itself. Yet, it is not simply a long cheer for a well-produced show and the talent behind it. *Dimensions* is a thoughtful assessment of the diverse forces that shaped the anthology, including the people, technology, limited finances and early development of the medium of television in which *The Twilight Zone* was produced. The reader sees how all these forces, both seen and unseen, inspired the program's development, but also how the standards of excellence that Serling and his team brought to the five years of *Twilight Zone's* original production



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contributed to what we today call “the golden age of television.”

*Dimensions* is divided into three main parts. First is a series of five original chapters by the author in which Stanyard discusses Serling himself and his creative genius, the team that worked with Serling on the show, themes addressed in the anthology, the unexpected comedy sometimes offered in the show and the directions Serling’s work took after *The Twilight Zone*. Second is a series of short commentaries by more than three dozen of the actors, writers, directors, producers and various talented individuals who worked on the show and with Serling. The third main section of the book is a series of a dozen essays offering appreciation to Serling and the team he developed for the show. These are written by various family members of the cast and crew, friends and Hollywood talent with some connection to the show. Part one, Stanyard’s analytical chapters, is superb. It is well written, offers fresh insight and is a delight to read, whether for *The Twilight Zone* fan or uninitiated. Stanyard’s chapters are based largely on his original analysis of *Twilight Zone* archives.

The second main part of the book, the commentaries and essays by actors, producers, directors and others associated with the show and its creator, are uneven. Some are insightful and fascinating, while others are bland and repetitive with what is already fairly well known about the show or Serling. Among the more valuable contributions is the essay by actor Cliff Robertson. Robertson starred in the

fascinating *Twilight Zone* episodes, “A Hundred Yards over the Rim” and “The Dummy.” In his essay he writes about these episodes. “There was one called ‘A Hundred Yards Over the Rim,’ and I had done my research, because it was about a family going westward on a covered wagon, and they become discouraged because they hit this desert, and a boy was sick.” Robertson explains how, based on his research, which showed that the people traveling west at the time were generally very poor, “the clothes they wore were always those black wool things, which is all right in the winter, but god forbid you hit a desert.” Robertson wanted to dress the part, “So I went to the wardrobe and I picked these clothes, and then I picked a stovepipe hat.” Unfortunately, as Robertson explains, the producer thought Robertson’s hat was the wrong look and didn’t want him to wear it. Finally, the producer called Rod to make the decision and Rod declared Robertson was right, and it was that stovepipe hat that gave “Over the Rim” perhaps its most memorable look.

*Dimensions* pays particular attention to the writers who provided the show so much of its impact. They provided the stories, as is noted throughout the book. One of the show’s most important core writers (in addition, of course, to Serling), was George Clayton Johnson. Stories he wrote became various *Twilight Zone* episodes, including “The Four of Us Are Dying,” “Execution” and “A Penny for Your Thoughts.” He also provided one of the most interesting essays in the book. He writes, “I wrote ‘All of Us Are Dying,’ a short story that Rod Serling bought that he retitled ‘The

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Four of Us Are Dying,' and he wrote a marvelous script for it. The same thing happened with a story called 'Execution.' When I originally wrote it, I called it 'The Hanging of Jason Black.' Rod changed the man's name to Joe Caswell, and the title to 'Execution.' The third story I sold him was called 'Sea Change,' but then I had to buy it back because of censorship problems [the cutting off of a man's hand]."

Although the show was among the most imaginative of television's golden age, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the stories were specifically written for particular actors, existing sets or props ( e.g., Robbie the robot from the movie "Forbidden Planet" inspired a *Twilight Zone* episode). As a CBS program, the show had access to the MGM back lot, and this was a fertile and diverse resource, as is noted by several of the book's contributors.

The final major section of *Dimensions*, the appreciation essays, are also somewhat uneven, but worth the read, especially those contributions that offer a technical perspective on the series. It is apparent from many of the appreciation essays as well as the commentaries, that *The Twilight Zone* was not just inspired by brilliant minds acting on their own initiative, but because of severe budgetary and time constraints (i.e., producing a weekly show), the writers, producers, directors and actors all had to dig deep into their imaginations to create believable sets and overall production techniques for the show. One particularly illuminating essay is written by John Ottman, who has composed soundtracks for many films, including "Superman Returns,"

"X2" and "The Usual Suspects." Ottman's essay provides a unique perspective on the music that helped define the show and maximize its impact. As Ottman notes, talented composers and conductors such as Bernard Herrmann, Jerry Goldsmith and Franz Waxman all created music for *The Twilight Zone*. Ottman explains how music not only helped give the show its unique character, but also how the widely recognized "Da da Da da" theme came to be. "The first part, ("Etrange 3") contained the weird guitar motif we all identify as the *Twilight Zone* "theme," and the second part spliced onto it from "Milieu 2" was the familiar downward chromatic wrap-up to the segment we all know and love," Ottman writes.

Throughout *Dimensions*, Stanyard has liberally illustrated the book with more than 350 photographs taken during production of the show. These photos offer a rare and entertaining perspective on the production of the show. "Looking through these behind-the-scenes photos brings back many fond memories of Rod Serling and those early days working on such a remarkable piece of television history," writes actor William Shatner, who starred in two memorable *Twilight Zone* episodes, "Nick of Time" and "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" and later as Captain Kirk in *Star Trek*. Echoing this view is Carol Serling, Rod's widow. *Dimensions* is "a worthy addition to *Twilight Zone* lore. The arrival of this treasure trove of 'lost' photographs and interviews with the Zone inhabitants is therefore a stupendous event."

Adding to this is Bill Mummy,

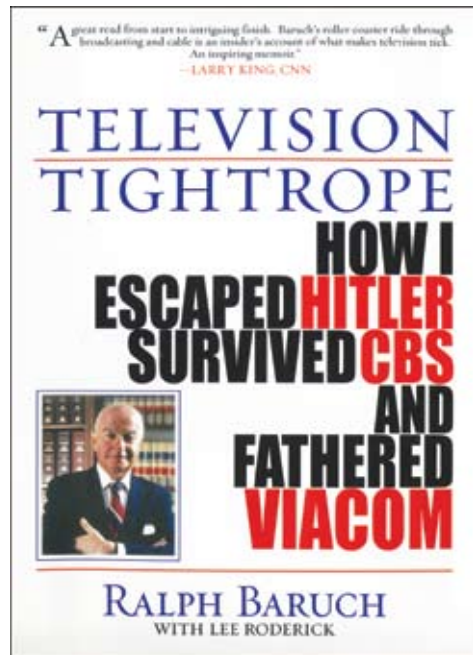
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who starred as a child in several *Twilight Zone* episodes, including the unforgettable “Long Distance Call,” “It’s a Good Life,” and “In Praise of Pip” and later as “Will” in *Lost in Space*. “Stewart Stanyard has pulled out all the stops here. Packed with an abundance of rare behind-the-scenes photographs and fresh interviews with those who were there, it brings insights to the myth of Rod Serling. This is a good book, a real good book. Read it, or I’ll send you to the cornfield!”

The photos and their captions often reveal insights into how shows such as *The Twilight Zone* were produced, and some the unique challenges faced in creating an anthology show that bridged between fantasy and science fiction and in varied venues. The caption for a photo of actor Cliff Robertson as settler Christian Horn in Serling’s “A Hundred Yards Over the Rim” illustrates. “The desert scenes were filmed on location near Lone Pine, California, and to save money on the budget, this episode was filmed along with “The Rip Van Winkle Caper.”

*Dimensions Behind The Twilight Zone* is an excellent book. Stewart Stanyard has conducted exhaustive research and assembled a rich blend of perspectives, people and pictures to help us understand one of the most lasting and influential of programs from television’s golden age.

*John V. Pavlik is professor and chair, the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Rutgers. His article on Broadband mobile media appears on page 7 of this issue of Television Quarterly*



## Television Tightrope: How I Escaped Hitler, Survived CBS and Fathered Viacom

By Ralph Baruch, with Lee Roderick  
Probitas Press, Los Angeles, North  
Logan, Utah and Washington, D.C.  
(356 pages, \$27.95)

By Fritz Jacobi

This is an odd amalgam of family memoir, television history, industry analysis, gossip and personal score-settling by one of television’s most eminent and distinguished executives who has a fascinating story to tell but

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is, alas, not a storyteller. Nor, for that matter, is his writing collaborator. Ralph Baruch, now 84, reflects on an extraordinary life. His father, a World War I German officer, and his mother, an educated daughter of privilege, were Jews who fled Hitler from occupied France in 1940. His chilling tale of escape includes carrying his grandmother on his back as they climbed the Pyrenees. He was 17 years old.

The narrative of these early days may be the best part of *Television Tightrope*. After the family's arrival in the United States he writes, "At last we were free." Like so many immigrants, he worked hard, including at a shoe factory, while moonlighting as an usher for \$6 a week. He became a top international executive at CBS through diligence, intelligence and successful salesmanship. He subsequently ran a tiny new enterprise named Viacom, which was nearly destroyed by CBS before it became the largest entertainment company in the world.

The trouble with this story is that the author includes every detail of every transaction in a mind-numbing manner. Whether it's "Viacode," an experiment with pay cable for individual movies not endorsed by the cable industry; Baruch being snubbed by and then resigning from the National Cable Television Association or FCC Chairman Richard Wiley's intransigence about imported cable signals, there is just Too Much Information. Then there is Motorola's possible interest in joining Viacom for pay-cable activities or Baruch's difficulties with CBS CEO Tom Wyman; or Marvin Davis misquoting Baruch to Paley and thereby doublecrossing

him. No file card is left unturned.

Since he is also writing a history of television, there are inexplicable errors and lacunae: A few examples: Spelling John Cameron Swazey as "Swazy"; listing some of Pat Weaver's greatest contributions like *Today*, *Tonight* and *Home* without mentioning Weaver's name; identifying early Viacom board member Jack White as president of the Cooper Union engineering school but failing to note that he had led National Educational Television for many years.

And although the author acknowledges the help of his editors, one wonders where they were when they failed to spot such gaffes as "they did excellent in school," "kidnaping," "rarely if ever has a U.S. president and the national news media" and let "shrunk" stand in for "shrank." And missing such misplaced antecedents as "while [I was] on the road ..my mother's heart condition grew progressively worse." The late Lauri Strauss's name is spelled "Laurie" in the next line. This reviewer knows from painful personal experience that proofreading is a tiresome chore, but such an enormous accumulation of errors is simply inexcusable.

This is not to say that *Television Tightrope* is not without significant redeeming features. There are some vividly accurate descriptions of former CBS President Jim Aubrey, "widely known as the smiling cobra, who thought nothing of having a producer cool his heels for half a day in his outer office, then dispatching a secretary to tell him to come back another time." There are hilarious portrayals of meetings with Paley and other top CBS brass, lively stuff when it doesn't

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get too intramural. And there is such admirable candor as “I had a distaste for the whole Hollywood scene and went out there as seldom as possible...I had notoriously bad judgment of which series were likely to succeed and made it a point not to get involved in programming projects.”

The author must be saluted for noting that “Except for PBS, broadcast television is no longer a public service, operating in the public interest, convenience, and necessity. It is a moneymaking machine, still driven almost completely by newly developed rating services.”

Finally, Baruch movingly describes his personal sorrows, crowned by the death of his first wife, leaving him a widower and the father of four daughters at 36. He later married a wonderful woman who restored the family.

Nonetheless, the bulk of *Television Tightrope* does not do justice to Ralph

Baruch’s extraordinary achievements, which should be the subject of an important biography. This is not it.

*Fritz Jacobi is the editor of Television Quarterly. His article on Pat Mitchell and the Paley Center for Media appears on page 3 of this issue.*

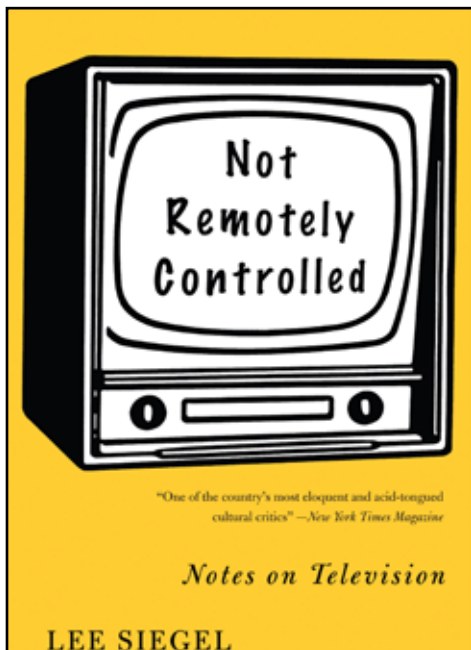
## Not Remotely Controlled: Notes on Television

By Lee Siegel  
*Basic Books, New York*  
(356 pages, \$27.95)

### By Earl Pomerantz

During the 1940’s, Lester Rodney wrote about baseball for the Communist newspaper, *The Daily Worker*. Between 2003 and 2006, *Not Remotely Controlled’s* Lee Siegel wrote about television for the political weekly *The New Republic*. I have no idea what those publications were thinking. They’ll come for the box scores and stay for the editorials on the exploitation of the proletariat? They’ll enjoy our observations on their favorite TV shows and forget about our early enthusiasm for the war in Iraq? I don’t understand it. How many new subscriptions did these marketing schemes bring them? Four?

It can’t be easy covering television for *The New Republic*. You walk into the office, and there’s a guy doing an “in-depth” on the firing of the Federal Attorneys; another’s looking at health care; another, the crisis in the Middle



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East; they look up and say hello, they ask what you're working on, and you say "The cultural implications of *Deal or No Deal*."

In his introduction, Siegel writes, "The marketing people are going to kill me when they read the following, but if you've picked up this book looking for straightforward television reviews, you're going to be disappointed." Read differently than the writer may have intended, this lighthearted disclaimer also serves as a screaming announcement:

"I'M NOT A TELEVISION REVIEWER!"

as in...

"What does your son do for a living?"

"He's a television reviewer."

"I'M NOT A TELEVISION REVIEWER! OKAY???"

Message received. Lee Siegel is not a television reviewer. He's a television critic. And by the way, it's for *The New Republic*.

This sensitivity is understandable, not just for a commentator for a respected periodical but for any writer covering television. Television reviewers – and television critics for that matter – have zero power. Remember *Action*? Remember *Bette*? Remember *Arrested Development*? Reviewers praised them; nobody watched. Television reflects unfiltered democracy. Nothing matters but the audience. It's like the joke about the dog food with the finest ingredients, the snappiest ad campaign, the perfect shelf placement in the supermarkets, but it still doesn't sell. Why? The dogs don't like it. In television, the audience is the dogs.

For me, when I don't understand a book's title, it's not an encouraging sign. *Not Remotely Controlled*. What exactly is that supposed to mean? I know it's a play on the word "remote." A "remote" is a device that allows you to perform various applications from a distance. The word "remote" is defined as "unlikely" or "improbable." One word, two definitions. But where's the connection?

Is the writer implying that the medium of television isn't *remotely* controlled, as in "there's not a chance in hell it's controlled"? That can't be it. Television is intensely controlled, by advertisers, or on premium cable, by executives' decisions geared towards boosting subscription numbers. Does he mean television itself is out of control? It doesn't seem to be. The medium's controlled down to the second or with advanced editing, tenth of a second. Television is researched and measured for every imaginable variable. They won't let it get out of control.

Does the title mean the audience's viewing habits are not remotely controlled? Maybe not from the outside, but they control them themselves; audiences watch the same shows over and over. Maybe it means the device is out of control; you press Channel 8 and you get Channel 52. Nah. You'd get a new remote, and you're back in control. And besides, that doesn't happen.

I'm thinking *Not Remotely Controlled* doesn't mean anything. But that can't be true. The guy's not an idiot; he writes for *The New Republic*. If only there were an explanatory chapter to clue me in. Unfortunately, there isn't.

*Not Remotely Controlled*, a

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compilation of essays, quasi-reviews and celebrity profiles from Siegel's column in *The New Republic* magazine and on its website, are all relatively short. His subjects cover the television spectrum from NBC's *Joey* – he liked it; he was wrong – to *Stump the Schwab* on ESPN, with stops at The History Channel's *Crusades* and Cinemax's *The Children of Leningradsky*. If you're more than a casual television watcher, you'll be intrigued by Siegel's never-uninteresting perspectives. His insights are always challenging and frequently on the money.

"Jack Lemmon, whose success as an actor was to perform failure to perfection." I think that's right. "Anyone the media builds up, regardless of his or her accomplishments or lack thereof, has to immediately get torn down. Yet, since most media constructions of instantaneous fame are driven by commercial purposes, the rapid backlash – which seems to come more and more quickly – is a healthy corrective to an empty phenomenon." Nourishing food for thought. And, of course, his writings gracing a left-leaning political magazine, there's always room for a shot at the president. "Under a better legal system, Bush would not be president; he would be captain of his cellblock's softball team." Not saying I agree, but I'm tickled by the imagery.

Then there are observations, which, while reading the book, I printed in the margins beside them the letters "IDK." "IDK" stands for "I don't know," meaning, "I do not know what he's talking about." There were a number of these. "Monk elevates intuitive genius by demonstrating how it elevates and

transforms suffering, and by presenting suffering as a condition that everyone shares, no matter what their gifts may or may not be." I read that one three times, I still didn't get it. On the cable cartoon series *Boondocks*: "It's striking how deep an affinity prejudice and satire have with each other. In both cases, the Procrustean idea of a person shapes and disfigures him into a caricature doomed to that idea." It's close, I can hear it; nope, it's not there. Then there are "tweeners." Critiquing Elvis: "He translated urban energies into a rural idiom, and vice versa." I got the first half, but he lost me on the "vice versa."

Let me not leave the impression that if you're smart, you shouldn't write about television. No one should be barred from this stimulating pursuit. I merely suggest you consider the enormously muscular football player who, when shaking hands, is careful not to squeeze too hard. When critiquing the People's Medium of television, you need to be vigilant not to cripple your audience with your super-powerful thinking ability.

Okay, one last guess about the title. Maybe the title means the writer himself is not remotely controlled. He's hired to write about television but simply uses the gig as a springboard for writing anything he wants. As Siegel explains, unlike novels, paintings and poetry, "thick" with interpretable meaning where "you have a great deal of work to do before you can start talking about the world outside," television is so "deliciously thin...you can dive right through the small screen into the world outside it." There's your opening – "thin" television driving

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your interpretations beyond “The Box.” Don’t blame the writer for dragging in Nietzsche, Vilfredo Pareto and Mircea Eliades’ *Shamanism*. The medium made him do it.

I’ll reserve the final word for Siegel himself: “Oh, the self-consciousness of [particularly] the [television] critic.” Okay, two words were mine. But he said it on page 40.

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*Emmy-award-winning writer Earl Pomerantz has recently completed a book of political commentary titled Both Sides Make Me Angry.*

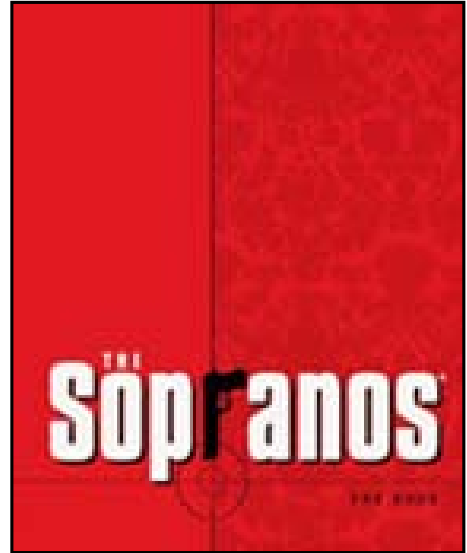
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### The Sopranos: The Book:

By Brett Martin  
*Time Inc, New York*  
(192 pages, \$21.95)

#### By Ron Simon

Contrary to T. S. Eliot, a world can end with a bang and a whimper. We are talking here about the world of *The Sopranos* that concluded with a silent blackout that was heard loudly around the media universe. On June 10, 2007 eight years of America’s most watched mob family came to a startling finale as Tony Soprano, his wife and two children gathered in a diner for what was maybe their last supper. A mysterious stranger perhaps morphs into vengeful hit man, snuffing out Tony to the tune of Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin’” just after the screen goes



dark. The audience did not stop debating Tony’s possible demise, and the finale, enigmatic and postmodern, has quickly entered the pop culture vernacular. Even a presidential candidate, Hilary Clinton, has parodied this ultimate scene in a political ad.

*The Sopranos* helped to define the artistic possibilities of television in a new century that was burgeoning with such new entertainment technologies as gaming and the Internet. The series was lauded in almost every publication, including *The New Yorker* and *New York Review of Books*, with most critics in agreement with historian Peter Biskind, who memorialized *The Sopranos* as “one of the masterpieces of American popular culture” in a *Vanity Fair* cover story. But after eighty-six episodes, running from 1999-2007, what remains of David Chase’s unique vision in the memory of the Soprano aficionado? What you can’t summon up in words is now commodified in auxiliary products from digital software to good

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old-fashioned books.

It should come as no surprise that the owners of the Sopranos franchise, Time Warner, rushed a lavish new volume to the marketplace. This book not only keeps the memory of the series alive for longtime fans, but also is an excellent starter kit for a new generation, who has to catch up on the phenomenon via DVD or the channel that purchased the rights for the next six years, A&E. It is chock full of insider knowledge of production that will make any viewer feel that he or she is now part of a secret Soprano society. As Tony well knows: "Once you're in the family, there's no getting out." The more than 200 photographs evoke an alternative mobster universe resonant with the Jersey look, that "hyperclectic" style of nouveau riche aspiration so characteristic of Tony and Carmela.

*The Sopranos* was one of the most textured series in the history of television. Every costume or set design summoned up an array of values and emotions that could not be communicated in dialogue. Costume designer Juliet Pulcan has stated that "from the moment the audience see a character, even before he or she speaks, you should know a lot about them—what kind of person they are, what class, what they find important." Every detail in the Sopranos frame, encompassing clothes and furnishings, elucidated the interior life of the conflicted characters whose professional code of ethics often collide with family traditions. One of the pleasures of the book is to isolate these defining details without the characters. We experience the sprawling Soprano McMansion, with all the signifiers of

Tony's ambition: the leather comfy chair, certainly an upgrade from Archie Bunker's chair now housed in the Smithsonian; the spacious kitchen with every showy convenience, including a gleaming knife set that was always threatening in the background; and the mock Renaissance painting, bringing good taste to the bed room. A half page is devoted to a true signifier of a Jersey moll girl, the elaborate, ostentatious nails. Seeing these nails, whose patterns included leopard and zebra stripes, as well as the logos of Louis Vuitton, we hear the nasally thick accent of the one character who expressed her desires through her fingers, Adrianna, the straight talking almost sweet wife of "Chris-tuh-fuh" who paid dearly for her conversations with the FBI.

Like the series, the book has a cinematic feel to it, with photos that take off from Annie Leibovitz's early artistic renderings of the Sopranos vibe. It combines the lucid, but never slavish prose of freelance writer Brett Martin and the visual flourishes of Headcase Design. This volume is a smart commercial product, a keepsake that does not embarrass the Sopranos aesthetic that Chase and team labored to keep consistent for six seasons. Most especially it is a souvenir to be dipped into when one wants to instantly recall the allure of *The Sopranos*, a necessity for many on Sunday evenings at 9:00 pm.

Beyond the surface appeal, which is considerable, there are also some new insights into the show's history and characters. Creator Chase considers Tony an extension of James Garner's Rockford, "TV's first postmodern, ironic detective." Chase had worked with

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creator Stephen Cannell on *The Rockford Files* and learned that the audience will forgive a character who has all-to-human frailties if he is good at his job. *The Sopranos* auteur decided to push the limits of audience identification with his murderous protagonist. Another central motif of the series is that the conflicted mobster, suffering from the intimations of mortality from the first episode on, decides to see a shrink and share many of his secrets with her. Analysts have applauded this use of therapy: "It's the best representation of the work we do that has ever been put on film or television," proclaimed Dr. Philip Ringstrom of the Institute of Contemporary Analysis. The writers reveal that they did not rely on the wisdom of a consulting psychiatrist; instead, since they all been in therapy, they trusted their psychoanalyzed collective gut.

*The Sopranos: The Book* also features special sections on the series' use of music, food and mayhem, each innovative in its own way. At the end, there is a recap of every episode, including the classic "Pine Barrens" show where the author asks the crew

the question plaguing every Sopranos addict: What happened to the Russian? *The Sopranos* succeeded with critics and the audience because it operated on many levels, from the purely visual to the deeply philosophical. This volume satisfies the hunger of the Sopranos fan on a tactile level: an enjoyable evocation of the characters and places that made the series so memorable. The Sopranos fan awaits the next book that delves into the deeper issues: the intersection of business and family in contemporary America and the show's relentless depiction of death and decay amid a debilitating loss of faith. Till then, we are left to ponder Tony's major theological statement: "even if God is dead, you still gonna kiss his ass!"

Curator Ron Simon organized the "Whacked Sopranos" seminar for the Paley Center for Media, where former cast members who were killed off conversed with executive producers David Chase and Terry Winter.

### Same Time, Same Station: Creating American Television, 1948-1961

By James L. Baughman  
*Johns Hopkins University Press*  
(460 pages, \$ 35.00)

By Norman Felsenthal

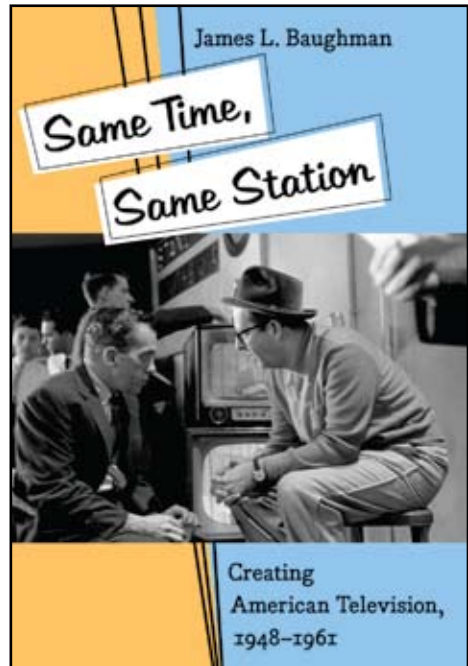
*Same Time, Same Station* is a fascinating book that provides a richly detailed and vivid analysis of television's formative years. The author, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, has compiled a carefully documented account of a 13-year period during which television evolved from a medium with cultural aspirations for an urban middle class to one almost totally dedicated to entertainment (and advertising) for the masses.

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Baughman has utilized numerous primary sources including manuscript collections as well as corporate, government and newspaper records to give the reader a careful accounting of the period. The first thing a reader notices is the extensive endnotes found on virtually every page. Most chapters have 100 or more notes and most notes contain two or more references. But this is no dull academic tome. It is instead a collection of observations, stories, and quotations woven together in a very readable prose.

The author discards the notion of a “Golden Age.” He reminds us that most television produced in the 1950s, however ambitious, does not hold up especially well today. Nor does much of the early comedy. Milton Berle’s scattershot approach – tell 10 quick jokes in the hope that some of them would provoke laughter – was tied to New York and other big cities. TV came later to smaller communities, particularly in the south and southwest, and Berle’s popularity declined.

Those executives designing television were split into two camps. The first, led by NBC, believed that TV presented an extraordinary cultural opportunity to break the monotonous formula of motion pictures and radio. The second, led by CBS, imagined a more imitative medium that re-created, for the small screen, entertainment that consumers had enjoyed on radio and in neighborhood movie theaters. “In perhaps the greatest irony in the history of TV,” writes Baughman, “the most creative response to the challenge of television was the least successful. By the late 1950s, the second or more



risk adverse of these two groups had won the argument.”

The author reminds us that, for all practical purposes, NBC and CBS were the only two networks with the stations and programs necessary to gain a meaningful audience share. ABC was a late arrival, handicapped by limited finances and a paucity of affiliates. Even worse, many of the ABC stations were saddled with a UHF frequency, a decided handicap when many TV receivers didn’t even have UHF tuners. The fledgling DuMont network, also handicapped by UHF assignments and totally outgunned financially, ceased operation in 1956.

Baughman has scathing contempt for the Federal Communications Commission of the period whose duty it was to assign channels and station licenses. The Commission proved to be an incompetent and, on several

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occasions, corrupt licensor, says the author. He labels the Six Report and Order as “the best mislaid plans” and insists that the FCC’s reliance on UHF turned into a policy disaster. However, he also notes that the CBS and NBC duopoly was not the worst thing to happen since both networks made heavy initial expenditures in network programming.

The most fascinating chapters of the book involve the jousting between NBC President Sylvester L. “Pat” Weaver and CBS Chairman William S. Paley for network supremacy. Paley is described as an intensely competitive man who rejected the suggestion of his number two executive Paul Kestin that CBS Radio settle for a very profitable second place. Paley would have none of that, fired Kestin, and replaced him with Frank Stanton. Baughman tells us that Paley even hated losing at billiards to his brother-in-law, John Hay Whitney, and accused him of taking lessons.

CBS and Paley had little interest in television, at least initially and when compared to NBC and David Sarnoff. CBS was very much NBC’s opposite. It’s main business was broadcasting, not electronics. Show business mattered; it was not an afterthought. It was this dedication to show business and broadcasting that led Paley to raid major NBC talent including Jack Benny. By September 1949, 16 of the 20 most popular radio programs were on CBS. While Paley’s intent was to increase CBS’s radio ratings, many of the radio stars, including Benny, did eventually migrate to television.

Sarnoff, says Baughman, all but detested the broadcast side of the

business. Consequently, he gave his newly hired network president Pat Weaver considerable autonomy in programming – something Paley would never do. Weaver, a former advertising executive, favored the theater as a model for television programs. He believed programs should originate from New York, the nation’s cultural center. And they should be live, not filmed. “Television,” said Weaver, “is too great and too powerful to be shackled with chains of custom and usage from radio.”

Under Weaver’s direction, NBC produced spectaculars such as *Peter Pan* with Broadway star Mary Martin in the title role as well as productions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* with Shakespearian actor Maurice Evans. These and similar programs were promoted heavily. Weaver hoped to build the largest possible audience by giving attention to the more sophisticated “light” viewer. (He and his wife restricted their own children to two hours of television a day.) And, since most of the spectaculars were in color, NBC would also be promoting the new RCA color receivers. Nine of the 10 highest-rated programs NBC aired in 1955 were spectaculars. But, as the cost of TV receivers declined and the increasing television audience began to more accurately mirror the nation’s population, viewers abandon the spectaculars in favor of CBS’s weekly comedies and filmed westerns from the upstart ABC.

Nor did buyers emerge for the very expensive color television sets. RCA had expected to sell 10.2 million sets in 1958; in reality, only 325,000 were purchased. Sarnoff didn’t wait for the dismal color TV sales report; he fired Weaver in

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1956 and replaced him with Robert E. Kintner, who had previously served in a similar capacity at ABC.

“To a very great extent,” notes Baughman, “Weaver and NBC had handed victory to Columbia. RCA had built the House of Television and Paley had moved into the master suite. Weaver was the great strategist; his competitors at CBS proved the better tacticians, far superior at the day-to-day, season-to-season plotting needed to win the great race.”

CBS had also established superiority in another area, news and public affairs. The network had earned its reputation during World War II, thanks in large part to the reporting of Edward R. Murrow and the other journalists that Murrow assembled for his broadcast team. Murrow moved reluctantly from radio to television where he teamed with producer Fred W. Friendly to create the documentary series *See It Now*.

“*See It Now* had the polish and professionalism absent in the slapdash newscasts,” notes Baughman. “It was deliberately targeted, not to the masses, but rather to the opinion leaders assumed to be Murrow fans.” The program made extensive use of film. It was budgeted at \$23,000 a week but sometimes exceeded \$100,000. Friendly and his colleagues were perfectionists, notes Baughman. They used 35-mm rather than 16-mm film and had as many as five camera crews attached to the program.

Baughman discusses the *See It Now* program dealing with Senator Joseph McCarthy but reminds readers that the Murrow attack on McCarthy was “late in the game.” He quotes playwright Arthur Miller, who greatly admired the

program but wrote that he “lacked the urge to applaud. ... [Murrow] had been so persuasive because he had said what everyone else had always known.”

Baughman reminds the reader that, overall, the *See It Now* ratings were never very high. “At first, CBS could live with [the program’s] modest ratings. But eventually it fell victim to CBS’s intensely competitive programming strategy. The program’s production costs were too high and its producers too high-handed.

“Murrow,” Baughman continues, “was caught in a time warp – it was still 1940. The Nation and the world were still at war. Paley had betrayed him. ... In retrospect, the remarkable aspect of *See It Now* was not that CBS had the audacity, given [the program’s] influential viewership, to cancel the series, but that the network, given its spendthrift ways, aired it in the first place.” Baughman reveals that Sarnoff approached Murrow about defecting to NBC, but Murrow, despite his anger, felt a greater loyalty to CBS.

In other chapters, Baughman discusses the emergence of ABC as a competitive network, the Quiz Show scandals, and the changing role of television advertising. In a final chapter, the author reviews some of the changes that have taken place since 1961. He briefly mentions the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 and notes that “Educational television became public television. Instead of being self-consciously instructional, the new system became self-consciously cultural.”

The author notes the growth of cable during the 1990s and suggests that this

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alternative medium represented “an abandonment of a 70-year broadcast ‘rule’ that prized large audiences above all other.” Cable also altered other broadcast rules. It relieved station and networks of their past obligations to produce programs for younger viewers while cable news became an excuse to reduce coverage of news events. Baughman also notes that cable, and particularly pay cable, allowed nudity and the use of obscenities.

Baughman ends the book on a note of regret. He laments that the aspirations and dreams that Pat Weaver and others shared for television and their conviction that television would be different from other mass media were never fulfilled.

*Same Time, Same Station* is an

enjoyable book. Readers unfamiliar with the first 13 years of television history will be well rewarded with an abundance of fascinating information about this important period. Those who have already studied this period will still enjoy the many insights and the fascinating stories that the author provides.

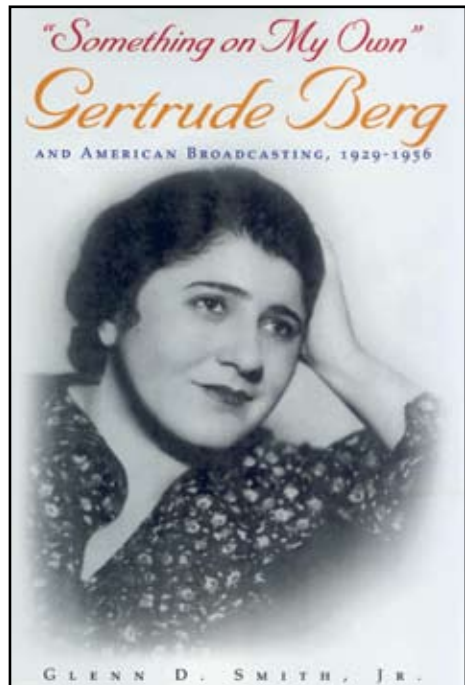
*Norman Felsenthal is Professor Emeritus of Broadcasting and Telecommunications at Temple University in Philadelphia. He represents the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences as a National Trustee and also serves as Chair of the Scholarship Committee.*

### Something on My Own: Gertrude Berg and American Broadcasting, 1929–1956

By Glenn D. Smith, Jr.  
*Syracuse University Press,*  
*Syracuse, New York*  
(293 pages, \$24.95)

By David Marc

There are a dozen good reasons for people interested in broadcasting history to be interested in Gertrude Berg. As a creative and performing artist, she conceived, wrote, produced,



and starred in her own network series, qualifying her as among the first in the industry to fit the contemporary

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description of “hyphenate” or auteur. As a businesswoman, she successfully retained her intellectual property, *The Goldbergs*, at a time when ad agencies were thought to hold title to broadcast entertainment by divine right. As a citizen, she stood up to the *Red Channels* blacklist at the risk of her career, refusing to fire her long-time colleague and friend, Phillip Loeb. As if these achievements were not difficult enough, she accomplished them as one of only two female producers in the industry. (The other was Irna Phillips, creator of the daytime soap opera, a “women’s” genre.) During *The Goldbergs’* 25-year prime-time run on radio and television, Gertrude Berg was one of a kind.

Glenn D. “Pete” Smith Jr. covers all these facets of Berg’s career, as well as her life as a wife, mother, and philanthropist, in this first comprehensive biography of the woman who millions of Americans knew as Molly Goldberg, the matriarch of a Jewish immigrant family in the Bronx. As popular in Peoria as on the Grand Concourse, the Goldbergs were, for many listeners and viewers, the only Jews they had ever “met.” Berg understood the power of mass broadcasting to bypass centuries-old barriers with personal messages, and she accepted the responsibilities that came with it. The task was particularly delicate, given its historical context. She constructed and developed a cast of emphatically Jewish characters, including her own persona, during a period that paralleled the labor strife of the Great Depression, the Nazi conquest of Europe, and the

McCarthyite witch-hunts that rocked the film and broadcasting industries.

Berg’s life, as the author points out, was less well-known than Molly’s, and he makes a strong effort recovering the artist. Born in 1899, Tillie Edelstein grew up in Harlem, spending summers and holidays at her family’s Catskill Mountains hotel, where she first developed her desire to become an entertainer. A bright student from a middle-class family, she was clearly college material, but acceded to her family’s wishes at age 19, marrying Lewis Berg, a British-born Jew with an engineering degree. Two weeks after the wedding, the couple moved to St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana, where the bridegroom had landed his first job. During the next three years, he mitigated the couple’s social isolation by sharing his education and love of literature and culture with her. Motivated by an ideological commitment to women’s rights, as well as love, Lewis Berg never faltered from his promise to support his wife’s career aspirations.

By the time the Bergs returned to New York City in 1922, Gertrude (an Anglicization of Gittel, her Yiddish name) had determined to become a playwright, and prudently identified the emerging art of radio drama as a way of getting a foot through the stage door. In 1927, Berg’s manuscript for *Effie and Laura*, the story of two five-and-dime clerks, was accepted for production by CBS. The network ordered four episodes, but cancelled it following the premiere, an action the author speculates resulted from the show’s feminist and socialist subtexts,

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elements not favored by Mr. Paley. Undaunted, she created another series, *The Rise of the Goldbergs*, and sold it to NBC, with better results. As star, chief writer and de facto (i.e., uncredited) producer, Berg received \$75 per week to cover production costs, including her salary. In two years, *The Goldbergs* had established itself among the most popular shows on radio, second in the ratings only to another “ethnic” comedy, *Amos ‘n Andy*. Berg’s weekly lump-sum payment had risen to \$2000.

Smith, a communications professor at Mississippi State University, is at his best in chronicling Berg’s tortured relationships with networks and sponsors, including her ill-fated attempt to shake free of typecasting by putting *The Goldbergs* to rest at the height of the series’ popularity during the mid-1930s. It was only after the final cancellation of the TV series some twenty years later that she was able to prove her versatility as an actress. After appearing in a number of stage comedies, she starred in the original Broadway production of Leonard Spigelgass’s *A Majority of One*. The role was familiar: a Jewish mother. But the intensity of the play’s subject matter, which includes race prejudice, the loss of a child, and the loneliness of widowhood, revealed Berg’s talents beyond the boundaries of the light comedy, and won her the Tony Award as “Best Actress” of 1959.

The author does his homework in writing this first comprehensive biography of the star, making good use of such primary resources as Berg’s personal papers at the Syracuse University Library and

the NBC corporate record archive at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Interviews with friends and family members provide personal texture. As a result, *Something on My Own* offers readers much more than the sum of the schmaltz-ridden nostalgia found in most popular appreciations of the beloved Molly or the angry repudiations of Berg as an assimilationist dressed in *Yiddishkeit* that are sometimes voiced by cultural historians. We learn that Berg created the Goldberg family as an “antithesis” to the Jewish stereotypes that had dominated American popular culture during the heyday of vaudeville. “The broken dialect and smutty wisecracks of the Jewish comedians...and the gushing sugar-coated sentimentalities of the ‘good-willers’ were...[both]...far away from the Jews I knew. I wanted to show Jews as they really are—as I, a young Jewish girl, knew them,” Berg told an interviewer from *Radio Mirror* magazine.

Smith’s coverage of Berg’s political activities goes beyond the well-chronicled Loeb affair to include her work on behalf of Jewish refugees in Palestine during the 1930s and her work in Franklin Roosevelt’s presidential campaigns. One legacy of Berg’s career not explored in detail is her pioneering role in creating what is now called “a franchise” through the use of product tie-ins. By holding on to copyright, she was able to create and control an array of *Goldbergs* products, including short stories, stage plays, a feature film, a cookbook, and even a newspaper comic strip. But, as Molly once said to her intellectually demanding Uncle

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David, “Don’t be so easy to criticize; a writer after all is a human being. Just read and enjoy.”

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*David Marc recently completed the text for a pictorial history of Upstate New York’s role in the invention, production and distribution of cinema. His current projects include a comparative study of Leonard Goldenson, William Paley and David Sarnoff for the forthcoming Cambridge Dictionary of Jewish History, Religion and Culture.*

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### TELEVISION REVIEW

## STUDENT EMMY WINNERS

### Saluting the new generation of broadcast journalists

By Greg Vitiello

Five years ago, the Foundation of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences established the National Student Television Awards for Excellence as part of its commitment to educating the next generation of broadcast journalists. Based on the seven programs that won the 2006-2007 “Student Emmy Awards,” the Academy need not worry. For the winners share a skilled grasp of their medium and an acute understanding of its vocabulary.

My favorite of the seven is the documentary winner, “Mythbusters – The Myth You’ve Heard a Thousand

Times,” by Team BCVI from Boyne City High School, Boyne City, Mich. Spoofing the Discovery Channel’s “Mythbusters,” the Boyne City team demonstrates several “scientific proofs” that water is really wet – from bombarding one team member with water balloons to firing steam at another. “I feel moisture,” says the boy who has been soaked with water balloons. And the tests go on, as the team members next aim an ice shooter at a ballistic gel. Finally, they return to their drawing board, where they plot out a full submergence test, proclaiming “anything in the name of science.” The test involves dropping a dummy from a high crane into a body of water. Andy, a team member, then jumps from the crane into the water. As music blares triumphantly, Andy declares, “I definitely think it’s wet. Wet and cold.” The characters in the award-winning film capture the posturing of the Discovery Channel’s “scientific” teams and display a brio all their own. Together, they produce a smart, funny spoof of this television genre. Appropriately, their film has been seen on the Discovery Channel’s parody special.

Only one of the other six winning films aims for levity, though with less success than “Mythbusters.” Produced by a team from Highland Park High School in Highland Park, Ill., “What’s On Your Screen” provides classmates with bite-sized reviews of top TV shows. Its host, Cyrus Toulabi offers his droll, sometimes too arch commentaries on the characters in *Heroes*, *OC*, *24* and other regular shows, while split-screen effects and stylized graphics display an

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© 2007 Marc Brian-Brown

*Allison Rogers (left) and Sharareh Drury of the Germantown (Tennessee) High School at the National Student Television Awards.*

impressive technical command of the medium.

The winner for best sports program also takes a light approach to its subject, examining the results when a girl competes with male football players, wrestlers and ice hockey players. The girl, Emily Brumenschenke, is outmatched (and not particularly athletic) but game. As she repeatedly says, "It's a lot harder than it looks," we are touched by her vulnerability. Unfortunately, there's nothing new or revelatory about "Girl Among Boys – a Three Part Series" by Amherst Steele High School of Amherst, Ohio. A female friend of mine was a member of the boys' track team at her high school more than 40 years ago. And Billie Jean

King dispelled the notion that men always win at sports when she beat Bobby Riggs in a much ballyhooed tennis match.

The other four winning programs all deal with weightier subjects. I was particularly impressed by "The Last Stain," a sobering, tough-minded feature about two "small-time stickup" kids who chance upon a windfall that places their lives in danger. The award winner for technical achievement, this film by the Chicago Vocational Career Academy in Chicago, Ill., is well-acted and professionally shot, often using silhouettes to capture its subject's ominous mood. Will the boys turn in the money they've chanced upon before seasoned criminals take the

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money from them forcibly? We wait suspensefully – and fatalistically – for the outcome. Not surprisingly, the film received top marks in every category – content, creativity, storytelling and execution -- from the professionals who judged it. “This film was just outstanding,” said Av Westin, executive director of the Academy foundation and an Emmy Award-winning news producer. “They did a remarkable job in the storytelling.”

Another urban tragedy inspired the writing award for the Germantown High School in Germantown, Tenn. Titled “September 11th, 2001: The Story of NABE and AUBER,” the program is a compilation of survivors’ accounts from economists who attended a conference at the World Trade Center Marriott Hotel and escaped the terrorist attack. The film intercuts news footage of the attacks and their aftermath with the economists’ interviews.

The effects of an environmental tragedy provided the material for the winner in the news category. Produced by Blue Valley Schools Broadcast Technology in Overland Park, Kans., “Olga: Growing up in America” is the touching story of a child whose parents left Belarus after the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear plant. Olga, a seventh-grader in Overland Park, was born with partial limbs but has learned to ice skate and otherwise lead a normal life as an American child. The short, sensitive film is given greater impact by having a child as narrator.

Olga’s upbeat determination to lead an active life contrasts with the subjects of a series of three public service announcements on teenage depression.

Produced by Lake Gibson High School in Lakeland, Fla., “Depression Awareness” won the Academy’s Hubbard Family community service/public service award. In the first spot, teenagers hold signs that spell out their dilemma (“If I don’t drink alcohol, I won’t have friends” is one). The outcome is clear: ostracism, loneliness, a reinforcement to their depression. The spot ends with the camera focused on a boy sitting alone in a classroom. The next spot begins with a boy on a rooftop, obviously contemplating suicide, then flashes back to scenes of pill-taking and violence. Will he jump to his death? The final spot presents a worrisome statistic: there is a one-in-15 chance that the teenager standing beside you suffers from clinical depression. Then, the film makers ask, “The question is, are you beside them?”

These seven films, winners in a field of some 600 entries, range widely in their concerns and their technical sophistication. They share a sensitive grasp of the television medium. I hope some of them will prosper in it.

And I hope you too will judge their talent and enjoy their vision. You can view all of their videos online at [www.nationalstudent.tv/2006-2007\\_student\\_videos.asp](http://www.nationalstudent.tv/2006-2007_student_videos.asp).

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*Greg Vitiello, whose article on “Frost/Nixon” appears on page 22 of this issue of Television Quarterly, wrote the script for NET’s “Through My Eyes,” an Emmy-nominated program about young filmmakers.*

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