

They Beat the Clock— NBC's Innovative Newsmagazine, *David Brinkley's Journal* (1961-63)

By Thomas A. Mascaro

CBS, which this year celebrates the 40th anniversary of 60 Minutes, has won the newsmagazine battle begun in the late 1960s. But 60 Minutes wasn't the first program to blend serious journalism with culture reporting and whimsy. NBC broke ground in the magazine field years before Don Hewitt & Co. introduced their iconic ticking stopwatch.

Picture Mike Wallace on his familiar *60 Minutes* perch setting up this story: "In 1948 the Russians sent Colonel Rudolph Ivanovitch Abel to work in New York City. He got in by way of Canada with a fake passport, rented a one-room studio in Brooklyn for \$35 a month, and pretended to work as an artist, but actually he was the top Russian spy in the United States."

Or think of Ed Bradley announcing this tease: "On February 27, 1961, the Russians formally announced that they invented jazz music. That was not their most important lie, but it may have been their biggest."

Or imagine this Morley Safer promo: "If seeing a Broadway show is

one of life's pleasures, putting one on is a clear agony."

It's easy to envision these stories on *60 Minutes*, but in fact they were all reported years before the 1968 debut of CBS's historic program by David Brinkley of NBC News. These and other stories aired in a weekly newsmagazine entitled *David Brinkley's Journal* that started making waves October 11, 1961—seven years before *60 Minutes*. *David Brinkley's Journal* was nurtured to life in summer 1961 by Julian Goodman, Vice President of NBC News and Public Affairs. Its prototype was Brinkley's *Our Man* series, produced by Reuven Frank. "Our Man in the Mediterranean" was a May 17, 1959 installment of *Kaleidoscope* (hosted by Charles Van Doren of quiz-show fame). Reuven Frank told the *Washington Post* the concept was an "untried form for television in which travel will serve as a stimulus and background for Brinkley's commentary."

Brinkley liked the *Our Man* format and the time was right for journalism experiments at NBC. Robert Kintner, fired by ABC and hired by NBC in



From the left: Ted Yates, David Brinkley and Stuart Schulberg
on the set of David Brinkley's Journal.

Photo: Courtesy of Sandra Schulberg

1956, became NBC president in 1958. He quickly challenged his chief rival through the dictum “CBS plus 30”—NBC would exceed by thirty minutes whatever CBS News produced.

NBC was also eager to capitalize on the popularity of their nightly news duo. Chet Huntley and David Brinkley had charmed viewers of the 1956 political conventions, so NBC News put them together on *The Huntley-Brinkley Report*, with Huntley reporting from New York and Brinkley from Washington.

NBC wanted more news presence during prime time. Huntley already had his own program, *Outlook*, which started in 1956 and evolved into *Chet Huntley Reporting* in 1958. They could simply move *CHR* to prime time. Brinkley was another matter.

NBC sent Julian Goodman down to Washington to work out a plan. Goodman was a veteran newsman and close friend of David Brinkley. He was hired by WRC as a news writer in June 1945. Brinkley, an NBC Radio news writer since 1943, was his supervisor. When Brinkley left the night news desk, Goodman stepped into his position.

He advanced through editorial and managerial roles in radio-TV news and was promoted and moved to New York in July 1959 as Director of News and Public Affairs. In January 1961, Goodman was elected Vice President, NBC News and Public Affairs, reporting to Executive Vice President Bill McAndrew.

Brinkley and Goodman developed a plan for television's first prime-time news “column,” a series of shorter, eclectic versions of the *Our Man* concept to be written and hosted by David Brinkley. They considered titles and agreed on the host's choice, “David Brinkley's Journal.”

Goodman pitched the idea to McAndrew, who liked it. They took it to Kintner. He liked it. Goodman had his green light with one major complication—Brinkley didn't like New York and wouldn't leave his home in Washington, D. C.

Goodman decided to staff the production unit at the NBC Washington Bureau on Nebraska Ave. in the District of Columbia, NW, in a new building dedicated by President Eisenhower on May 22, 1958—the same year

Kintner became NBC President and the network began its run at television news dominance.

Goodman had a host, a title, and target date for the premier—the fall season 1961. He needed a producer and a crew that could develop weekly reports shot “in living color” on *film*, when in walks a strapping 30-year-old Wyoming cowboy in a dirty rumbled trench coat—Frederick Langdon Yates.

“Ted” Yates was a rising star in television news. He hailed from Sheridan, Wyoming. He briefly attended the University of Virginia then became a writer for the coffee-chat program hosted by Tex McCrary and his beautiful wife, Jinx Falkenburg.

Yates was a Marine combat correspondent during the Korean War, an NBC White House correspondent and show producer, and then he went back to Tex and Jinx.

Around this same time, Ted met Mike Wallace through a mutual friend, Ted Cott. Cott was developing the first 30-minute local newscast for Dumont’s Channel 5 in New York. In addition to Yates and Wallace, Cott’s staff included Bill Kobin, Sandy Socolow, and a smart young production assistant named Marlene Sanders.

Yates and Wallace became close friends and collaborators on an aggressive kind of news program called *Night Beat*. *Washington Post* TV Critic Lawrence Laurent remembers Yates knew how to produce engaging television. In preparing guests, the field researcher would first ask whether there was anything the guest did not want to talk about. At show time, that would be Wallace’s first question.

The aggressive *Night Beat* style evolved into the signature “Mike Wallace interview” and attracted

media attention. So when Yates walked into Goodman’s office, his reputation preceded him. Ted made his pitch to fund a project for Tex and Jinx. “Forget about that,” Goodman said, “I want to offer you the best job in television.”

NBC hired Yates in May 1961, the month FCC Chairman Newton N. Minow called television a “vast wasteland.” Fallout from the Quiz-Show



Julian Goodman, who as NBC's head of news and public affairs, helped develop David Brinkley's Journal.

Scandal plus Minow’s challenge helped motivate an increase in news programs, like David Brinkley’s *Journal*.

Yates was primarily a studio producer. *DBJ* would require field shooting on film, not Ted’s strong suit. His first act was to hire an accomplished documentary filmmaker and fellow Marine, Stuart Schulberg, writer Budd Schulberg’s younger brother.

Stuart Schulberg led documentary film units for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during WWII, the Office of Military Government, U.S. (OMGUS) during the Berlin occupation, and later

the Marshall Plan Paris Film Unit.

To bolster their filmmaking talent, Yates hired Robert Asman away from Burton “Bud” Benjamin’s historical documentary on CBS, *The Twentieth Century*.

Robert Doyle, who produced conventions, Congressional hearings, and other Capitol events, was named Director of DBJ. On August 4, two months from air, Doyle explained his set-design motif in a memo to Yates: “The Brinkley set must have intimacy, character and the personality of Brinkley. It will be a warm set with color and quality—simply a room where you might expect to find Brinkley.”

Doyle drew up camera plots and sketches for the set, to be constructed of materials from the two major sponsors, Pittsburgh Plate Glass and the Douglas Fir Plywood Association. To reinforce the image of Brinkley as a TV columnist, Doyle charged the crew to find a large roll-top desk—“ornate enough to be interesting.”

As productions evolved, staff expanded. Schulberg told Yates about a film editor he’d met in Europe, a dashing Frenchman named Georges Klotz, who took in Desmond McElroy as his apprentice. Cornell graduate Judy Bird Williams (now Judy Bird), was hired as a researcher and field producer. Gail Surface was the unit secretary; Carl Robinson the unit manager.

Robert F. Rogers was a former Army captain who “got the Hemingway bug” and sent writing samples to Ad Schulberg’s agency. Ad told her son Stuart of this promising scribe and Yates hired Rogers as a writer and associate producer.

Although Yates and Schulberg were co-producers, Ted was first among equals. On September 1 he wrote to Julian Goodman outlining the first five programs: organized crime and American eyesores; Russian espionage and Europe’s newest art movement; conservatism on college campuses and Soviet civil defense; cowboys and



David Brinkley (center) and Robert Asman (far right) in 1962.

Photo: Courtesy of Mr. Asman

Indians; Cocoa Beach, outside Cape Canaveral, and a story about humorous TV commercials.

Yates also outlined a gamut of future topics—the Lindbergh kidnapping, British Guiana, Cambodia, the Peace Corps, French rock 'n' roll, the biography of a tenement.

Despite the esprit de corps fueling the NBC-Washington unit, the productions weren't all rosy. Nothing raises sparks like the clash of egos or outsiders criticizing someone's hometown. The wry, witty host was part lightning rod, part flint against steel.

David Brinkley was in essence a writer, a talent often accompanied by self-absorption, if not self-centeredness. Writers agonize over word choices, which leads to sensitivity. And although delivery is important, for writers, meaning trumps performance.

Brinkley did not like retakes. If a director thought Brinkley might improve his delivery through another take, Brinkley would want to know what was “wrong.” No one wanted to suggest it was David's delivery, so the director would often attribute the problem to a crew mistake or machine glitch.

Brinkley didn't like set-ups either, which quickly put him in conflict with Stuart Schulberg. The Cocoa Beach story focused on cheesy establishments catering to space-shot spectators around interview, Brinkley started to leave the site, his fair complexion baking under Florida's hot sun.

Schulberg called Brinkley back to shoot the reverse angle questions for the interview. An argument erupted. Brinkley accused Schulberg of employing the “Hollywood” tactics of his movie mogul father, B. P. Schulberg. Stuart held his ground, which earned the respect of the crew,

and Brinkley consented to continue filming. Weeks later, when he saw the finished piece, he realized Schulberg's motives and apologized.

The premiere was pushed to October 11. The opening segment signaled the editorial courage of *David Brinkley's Journal*. “Good evening,” Brinkley began. “If all of us who live in this country and love it and admire its beauty would stop taking it for granted long enough really to look at it, we'd see what we are doing to it.”

While viewers heard the strains of “America the Beautiful,” they saw America's eyesores—polluted rivers, dirty streets, billboards, slums, litter and garbage dumps. This was during the year before Rachel Carson awakened the environmental movement with her book *Silent Spring* (1962) and nearly a decade before the first Earth Day in 1970.

Brinkley then hinted at NBC's motivation for airing a documentary-style magazine in prime time: “This is a new television program for adults. We will not give away any washing machines, nor play any games in the studio. We will try each week to find something worth a half hour of your time and ours.”

In the NBC release for the premier of *David Brinkley's Journal*, Yates had explained the Cocoa Beach angle. Before a rocket launch from Cape Canaveral, Cocoa Beach devolves into “a tribal ritual dedicated to the gentries of the cape,” complete with bongo players, bikini-clad Limbo dancers and a horde of picnickers awaiting blast-off.

In the program, Brinkley called it the expensively gaudy side effects of the space age: “A few years ago [Cocoa Beach] had one wooden shack selling bait and sandwiches, no money, few people, many snakes. Now, with

Canaveral there it has money, traffic jams, jazzy motels, many dedicated people and some who are not.”

Brinkley segued to the final segment by coupling the splashdown of astronaut Gus Grissom to editorial blather in the London Penny Press about human spaceflight being “foolhardy and unnecessary.” Should Americans care, Brinkley asked.

The die was cast. *David Brinkley's Journal* meant to flick the comfortable. The *Post's* Lawrence Laurent called it “superbly edited” and “chock-full of shockers”: “With all its high-quality preparation and technical excellence, the program is still a mirror to the Brinkley personality. This is an astringent mixture of wit, acerbity and horse sense.”

Some Cocoa Beach residents didn't much care for Brinkley's report, though, and protests and praise became familiar echoes after *David Brinkley's Journal* installments.

As much as *DBJ* was designed around Brinkley, the series was a palette for producers' specialties. Stuart Schulberg was an expert on European affairs. This led to reports on expatriates living in Paris, London tattoo parlors, British gambling and race problems and Algerian refugees. He took a liking to Haiti and produced two segments there.

One of the more interesting topics was researched by Judy Bird on her first field trip. Mound Bayou was an all-black town in the Mississippi Delta purchased in 1887 by former slaves Isaiah T. Montgomery and B. D. Green. Residents were celebrating Mound Bayou's 75th anniversary.

Bird discovered a ramshackle place where everything was broken down and unpainted and a climate that was sickly hot. The surrounding white

communities did everything possible to hamper the town and prove blacks unable to manage. Bird's research, though, revealed fortitude and resilience among Mound Bayou residents.

The locals were guarded about this young researcher and pending arrival of a Washington, D. C. film crew. Just as Judy started to gain the trust of the people, she was summoned by the sheriff. The Mound Bayou lawman sat stabbing an awl into his wooden desk while he quizzed this “Yankee” about whether NBC was there “to stir things up.” Bird assured the constable Brinkley had no desire to change anything—just to document the celebration. The result was a quaint piece of Americana Brinkley liked very much.

George Freedland, another Marshall Plan acquaintance of Schulberg, directed several programs on India and Asia. Bob Rogers was assigned to South and Central America and a story on the Peace Corps (*Journal* segments later developed into long-form documentary treatments by Rogers and Yates).

Westerners and free spirits could also take heart with Ted Yates in the saddle. The story “Cowboys” aired in the first month and featured the modern American rancher and his peculiar attitudes about work and play, security and freedom and television Westerns.

Another memorable program featured an interview with Teamsters Union boss Jimmy Hoffa. Unit manager Carl Robinson needed a second camera and phoned an old friend, cinematographer Richard “Jim” Norling. Norling jumped at the chance and won a lifelong friendship with Yates and Rogers and a notable career as a free-lance filmmaker. *David Brinkley's Journal* won the most coveted prize in television news—attention was paid, much of it favorable, or unfavorable for

desirable reasons.

The second installment, “Maybe Crime Does Pay,” was about members of organized crime living in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. During shooting, an angry mob surrounded the station wagon holding the NBC film crew. They smashed a window; Yates and his cameraman suffered cuts from broken glass. Not to be deterred, Yates hired a helicopter to film a fly-over of the luxurious homes.

That program also presented an interview with Brinkley’s friend, Robert F. Kennedy. Kennedy was on a mission to prosecute members of organized crime. The Attorney General explained how the underworld penetrated legitimate businesses and derived immense economic power from the two-dollar bet placed with local bookies.

Brinkley zinged the Grosse Pointe police for failing to make any arrests after the assault of his crew (although Yates had filed no charges). Two months later, Anthony J. Tocco brought a \$300,000 defamation suit against NBC and Pittsburgh Plate Glass claiming he, his wife, and their four children had been “held up to public hatred, shame, contempt, ridicule and disgrace” by the report. (The suit was settled out of court.)

A few weeks later, Brinkley focused the *Journal* on slum landlords in New York City, telling viewers how to get rich: “Go into a big American city, buy some grimy tenement in the slums, leave it grimy, don’t spend a nickel on it, pack it with tenants, and then relax, because the local and federal tax laws will guarantee a tremendous profit.”

Viewers saw a building at 311 E. 100th St. built in 1904, the kind of place that was supposed to put an end to slums. Twenty-five landlords later, the address

housed 139 tenants. Brinkley explained in his clipped cadence: “fifty-five adults and eighty-four children, mostly Puerto Ricans. They generally are not educated, speak not much English, and so are not able to earn much and are drawn here by the low rents,” \$44.83 per month.

An inspector could find 50 code violations “in half an hour, but somehow he almost never does and the building slowly disintegrates, as it has for 57 years, turning out enormous profits every year.” The city absorbs economic and social losses—narcotics violations, burglaries, homicides, an infant falling from a fire escape.

Brinkley stopped short of an Edward R. Murrow-*Harvest of Shame* call to action: “Any discussion of a social problem usually gets around to blaming it on public apathy. That is not true here. We elect people to do these things but they don’t do them. City governments

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continue putting low taxes on slum property, even though they make a lot of money. . . . the law guarantees a profit and gives the slum owner a free ride on the public’s back.”

A pretty good piece of reporting—unless you happened to be the owner who had just been called a “slum lord.” Unit Manager Arthur White remembers the owner was incensed by the label and initiated a long series of legal actions against the report.

By far the most attention directed at David Brinkley’s *Journal* followed the 1962-63 season premier, “The Great Highway Robbery.”

President Eisenhower was the prime

mover behind the interstate highway system. In May 1954 he called America's road system "obsolete" and promoted a "grand plan" for highway construction totaling \$50 billion. The President signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 on July 29, 1956 to reduce traffic deaths, driving time and facilitate transportation during emergencies. With federal money flowing at a rate of 90 cents for every dime chipped in by the states, the nation's cement mixers started pouring roads at a record pace. National highways, however, quickly became local issues.

In February 1962, Jack Anderson published a feature in *Parade*, "The Great Highway Robbery," and quoted Rep. John Blatnik, head of the Special Subcommittee on the Federal-Aid Highway Program: "Corruption permeates the highway program . . ."

Yates and Brinkley set out in early 1962 to show what was happening in local neighborhoods. Brinkley wrote to a friend a week before the October 1 broadcast and anticipated the furor: "Soon after we're off the air, there will be charges we have exaggerated, have taken a few 'isolated incidents' and magnified them in such a way as to reflect on the whole highway industry. Well, the fact is we can't tell one hundredth of it."

What they did show was pretty rotten. "Never have so many thieves had the chance to steal so much from so many," Brinkley said to start the hour-long season opener. Then he summarized the scope of the problem: Congressional investigations in five states, General Accounting Office investigations of land purchases for rights-of-way in 22 states, FBI reports of price fixing, shakedowns and bribery; 13 state investigations—"a picture of sloppiness at best and downright stealing at worst."

Contractors sent engineers cash, building materials for personal homes, turkeys and whiskey. Construction was shoddy. Thirty-nine of 40 bridge spans over Tampa Bay failed to meet specifications. Builders used salt water from the bay instead of fresh water.

Brinkley challenged Rex M. Whitton, President Kennedy's choice as Federal Highway Administrator: "Is the philosophy here in the Bureau [of Public Roads] that the road building is up to the states and that your job mainly is to mail out the checks?"

Brinkley asked whether Whitton had found more stealing? "More irregularities," Whitton replied. "Nobody wants to use the word stealing, for some reason," Brinkley said. "Well it's a sin to steal," Whitton concluded, "and most of us are against sin."

After presenting his case, Brinkley served up what audiences enjoyed most, his plain-spoken candor: "No doubt Mr. Whitton is against sin, and so, no doubt, is the Bureau of Public Roads. We have no evidence anyone there has even taken a ham from a contractor. But there is plenty of evidence, a little of which you have seen, that the Bureau is inadequate."

The backlash started as soon as Brinkley signed off. Ohio Public Highways Director, Michael DiSalle, telegraphed Whitton: "LAST EVENING I WITNESSED AN APPALLING EXAMPLE OF DELIBERATE AND MALICIOUS DISTORTION OF TRUTH IN THE REFERENCE TO OHIO ROADBUILDING IN THE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED DAVID BRINKLEY TV JOURNAL . . ."

Whitton telegraphed Robert Sarnoff, President of RCA, complaining Brinkley misled the

public by blurring the distinction between federal oversight and state projects; for omissions, such as a “road to nowhere” being a work in progress; for incorrectly reporting on FBI investigations; and especially for omitting constructive efforts by the Bureau. Whitton issued a six-page, point-by-point critique along with a lengthy press release, which was picked up nationally by *The New York Times*.

Public officials and contractors were understandably peeved at the Journal’s revelations, especially because Brinkley had assembled a series of local issues into a nationally televised report. Gov. Wesley Powell of New Hampshire sued NBC for libel. (The case was thrown out in Federal District Court May 24, 1963.)

Conversely, viewers were not only supportive, they also offered suggestions for future programs: A Florida resident sent Brinkley a letter from the Tampa Tribune suggesting the Howard Frankland Bridge be renamed “Ole Salt Water Bridge!” A Los Angeles

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man requested a program on Defense spending and another on the Peace Corps budget. A postcard from Miami read: “It takes courage to do this and it serves a great need. . . . My hope is that someday someone will produce a program showing the American people the true story . . . about cigarettes and what they do to our people.”

Others defended Brinkley for the wrong reasons: “Doesn’t it seem ridiculous that the Federal Government can spend Millions of dollars of OUR tax money on integration and will not bother about the miserable state of the road program.”

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A few weeks after the broadcast, Lawrence Laurent had drinks with Yates and Schulberg at Trader Vic’s and talked about the *Journal’s* many controversies.

Stuart Schulberg explained, “The complaints, you’ll notice, always center on ‘why didn’t they show our Boy Scout troop’ or ‘why didn’t they talk about our fine hospital.’ They’re not griping about facts. They’re complaining because we wouldn’t go for some image they have tried to create.”

In November, Brinkley wrote to friends: “The highway program has caused a lot of hell-raising and, so far, one lawsuit, which we are not worried about. We disturbed and upset a lot of people who for years had been doing a lot of cozy, quiet stealing and cried ‘foul’ when we put it on the air. But no one has been able to deny one fact. Not one.”

And so it was for other programs—a mix of reactions. An interview with Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa began with a shouting match between Brinkley and Hoffa before filming, then settled into a portrait of a complex figure in a complicated position. Robert Kennedy and Hoffa both sent notes of praise. Brinkley went back to the interview decades later to include the story in his memoir.

David Brinkley was proud of the *Journal*, which he described as a precursor to *60 Minutes*—“fairly good, not great,” he wrote in a memoir. Good enough, though, to win major recognition, including a George Foster Peabody Award in 1962 for “Best Television News Program” of 1961; a 1961-62 Emmy Award for “Outstanding Program Achievement in the Fields of Educational and Public Affairs

Programming”; a 1962-63 Emmy for “Outstanding Program Achievement in the Field of News Commentary or Public Affairs.”

David Brinkley's *Journal* also enjoyed critical praise from print columnists. Laurent celebrated the new form of “personal journalism.” John Crosby wrote in the *New York Herald Tribune*, “Brinkley is one of the first to bring wit to reporting on television. Brinkley and Yates, who has enormous integrity, should make as formidable a team as Fred Friendly and Edward R. Murrow.”

In April 1963, though, Laurent listed the ten programs anchoring the bottom of the ratings list—mostly news, including *David Brinkley's Journal*. Sponsors wanted to stick with Brinkley, but low ratings and controversial mail created disincentives.

Looking toward increased duties in the upcoming political season, coupled with the grind of a weekly show, in addition to co-anchoring the nightly news, there were multiple reasons for Brinkley to reassess his tall stature as a TV lightning rod.

For the 1963-64 television season, Brinkley, Yates and Schulberg continued as a unit, but *David Brinkley's Journal* slipped away quietly. The NBC-Washington team shifted to documentary productions, including some Our Man programs.

The penultimate original report of *David Brinkley's Journal* presented an interview with outgoing FCC Chairman Minow. During the same period Minow had pushed the industry to raise its intelligence quotient, *David Brinkley's Journal* did just that. Shortly after Minow left office, *DBJ* signed off.

Months later President Kennedy was killed in Texas and David Brinkley

took his post as one face of the legions of television men and women holding a grieving country together. Historian Mary Ann Watson explains in *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years*, national appreciation for television news in the aftermath of horrible crimes in Dallas and the tearful funeral in Washington, exonerated network television for many of its transgressions. One headline of the day read, “In Time of Crisis Wasteland Bloomed.”

Many critics ridiculed NBC for its failure to field a newsmagazine that could compete with the juggernaut *60 Minutes*. Dateline may be a recent success, but ever since *60 Minutes* clicked, NBC has tried everything in a losing contest. And like an old Timex watch, *60 Minutes* just keeps on tickin'. In September 2008, CBS celebrates the 40th anniversary of *60 Minutes*.

For decades the term “newsmagazine” has been synonymous with *60 Minutes* and competitive programs featuring more than one story per installment, an alternative to a documentary, which covers a single subject in its time slot. *60 Minutes* was not the first eclectic program offering multiple segments, though. *See It Now* in 1951 started as a magazine. *Person to Person* began in 1953 as a celebrity newsmagazine.

Background, produced by Ted Mills, Reuven Frank and John Lynch, premiered on NBC News in 1954 as a single-topic series. But it covered off-beat stories like the arrival of television in Ft. Wayne, Ind., and Islam in the modern world. *Background* evolved into *Outlook*, a newsmagazine airing from 1956-58.

60 Minutes remains the gold standard for blending serious journalism,

Photo: Courtesy of Sandra Schulberg



*Cassius Clay with David Brinkley
in "Boxing's Last Round"*

investigative reporting, and foreign affairs, with entertainment and culture. Even former NBC News President Reuven Frank, who complained about the celebrity effect of *60 Minutes*, praised his CBS competitors for upholding journalistic values.

60 Minutes is so entwined with American culture it's easy to forget there was life before the clock. Even sea changes, though, result from the ebb and flow of a series of waves, and Don Hewitt is the first to admit their success was the result of accidents.

American cinéma vérité pioneer Robert Drew, who followed Senator John F. Kennedy with the first untethered sync-sound film camera in the 1960 Wisconsin Primary, wanted to put *Life* magazine on television. The vérité portraits and crisply edited crisis situations of the Drew Associates were well-suited to a "magazine" sensibility.

Then there were the electrifying Great Debates between Senator Kennedy and Vice-president Richard Nixon. Just imagine the excitement experienced by television director Don Hewitt inside the control room transmitting the very moment, as Watson writes, when television news eclipsed print.

Out of this froth of innovation came

another precursor to what we think of as a "newsmagazine"—TV columnist David Brinkley.

When asked whether we could think of *60 Minutes* as a blend of the edgy Ted Yates-Mike Wallace *Night Beat* and the wry commentary of *David Brinkley's Journal*, Don Hewitt generously agreed: "I was a big fan of David Brinkley, because he was out of the mainstream of what TV was doing. He was a little sassy. He never took himself too seriously."

In explaining the *60 Minutes* "blend," Hewitt recalled an observation by John Crosby of the *New York Herald Tribune*, referring to *See It Now* and *Person to Person*, respectively, as "high Murrow and low Murrow." Hewitt realized, "That's the answer."

During this 40th anniversary year of *60 Minutes*, Don Hewitt will receive the Edward R. Murrow Award for Lifetime Achievement from Washington State University's Murrow School of Communication. The repertory company he built is peerless—not just in news but in all of network television. It was also pollinated by accidents, experiments and innovative pioneers, including David Brinkley and his NBC News television "column," *David Brinkley's Journal*.

A frequent contributor to Television Quarterly, Tom Mascaro is writing a book about David Brinkley's Journal, Ted Yates, Stuart Schulberg, Robert Rogers and the history of the NBC-Washington documentary unit. He is co-founder and the first Chair of the Documentary Division of the Broadcast Education Association. His chapter on "HBO Documentaries" appears in The Essential HBO Reader (University Press of Kentucky, 2008).