

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

"For the People" is the latest entry in the Sunday night television sweepstakes. It smacks of "Naked City" and "Slattery's People" and it's in a tough competition spot. But it has the advantages of a big new star and a good producer.

It is difficult to come up with a new angle to the Crime-Doesn't-Pay drama but "For the People" makes an effort.

The advance publicity on the series made this statement: The protagonist is a young assistant district attorney and he is portrayed as a recognizable human being, fallible, with prejudices and emotions of his own. He is realistic enough to recognize flaws in the legal machinery and sometimes receives a setback for his efforts to see justice done.

This is easily recognizable as yet another statement of the philosophy of flexibility which permeates television these days where justice is no longer a black-and-white affair but gray, and where the hunter is as mixed up as the hunted. It does little to comfort an already disillusioned public.

work in "Naked City." The best thing about "For the People" is Shatner himself. He has a fine open face and he is a skilled performer whose training ground stretches all the way from his native Canada to American TV, movies and the stage. In 1963 he played the title role in the most expensive TV pilot ever made—"Alexander the Great." I have a hunch he'll make a better assistant district attorney.

THE FINAL SHOW in Tennessee Ernie Ford's current ABC series will be telecast March 2.

This means one of television's most successful entertainers is leaving the daily TV grid but it does not mean that he is leaving either television or Northern California. Although the old Peppercorn hasn't announced it, it is certain that he will star in his own weekly situation comedy, co-produced by Hollywood Revue Studios, to be filmed in Woodside or Palo Alto, possibly on Stanford University property.

One of the most oft-repeated sentiments expressed by Hollywood actors, (other than "I do.") is "I wish I didn't have to live in Hollywood."

IN THE OPENING show the hero was so obsessed with bringing a big-time racketeer to justice that he made deals with two minor hoods who are turned free after giving the prosecution information that will lead to their boss.

"Everyone in this office makes deals to achieve an end," justifies William Shatner in the leading role. But he soon learns that such deals don't always end either happily or honorably.

In this case the gangster suffers a heart attack before he can be apprehended and dies anyway. But one of the hoodlums who was released fatally beats the 15-year-old daughter of the informer responsible for his arrest.

The script was harsh and the film work realistic. Executive producer Herbert Brodwin likes it that way. His other shows are "The Defenders" and "The Doctors" and character called "Good Sam" biography is Jack Priestly which was a Jack Lemmon who won an Emmy for his

But today most of the comfort in acting is the residual rewards coming from a weekly filmed series which can be re-run at will and ad infinitum. During the three years he has been doing his daily shows from the San Francisco studios of ABC-TV I would venture to guess that he could have been shooting 100 weekly half-hours of situation comedy that would be valued in the millions.

Highly placed spies of mine say that Ford's situation comedy series will be based on a character called "Good Sam" which was a Jack Lemmon who won an Emmy for his

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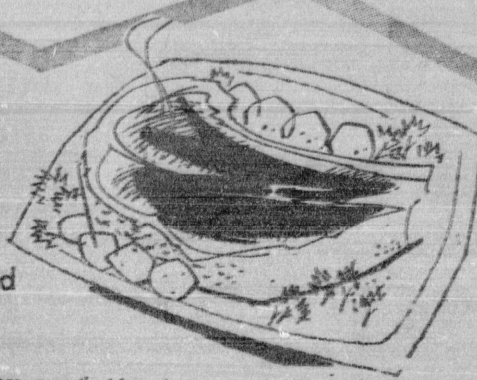
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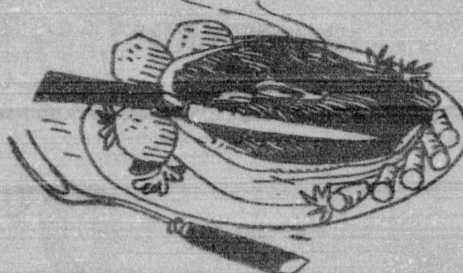
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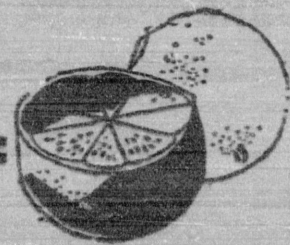


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