

Assignment TV

By TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY

Ten of the most successful television executives in the business assembled recently at the Hollywood Festival of World Television to discuss the program trends for next season. With the exception of Jack Haley Jr., a producer of documentaries, they presented a picture of TV's creative powers that was disheartening as an open grave.

Here were men whose opportunity to reach the feelings of their fellow men is unlimited. No men in history—not even the great ones—have been given such a chance to inspire so vast an audience, to widen its entertainment horizons and stimulate its interest in the real riches of the world, yet they spoke like small men.

In discussing their programs and their aims not one—repeat, NOT ONE—spoke in terms of ideas or inspiration. They were concerned solely with "what will sell" and what will attract the largest ratings. It was a grim display.

They have no faith in the accuracy of Nielsen ratings yet they live by them exclusively and admit that they do. They uttered banalities of the most juvenile sort and appraised their own and each other's efforts as if they were discussing accomplishments of the most dazzling sort.

"WE'RE MAINLY in business to sell merchandise. I'm very proud of 'Batman' for what it represents. It proves that something new, fresh and different can get on the air..."

"Of course, great new shows like 'Batman' are encouraging because they are appealing to two levels of intelligence..."

"Everything depends on what program you follow. If it's a hit, you'll have a hit. Anything that followed 'I Love Lucy'—even a test pattern—would have been a hit. 'Batman' is a true hit because it's on after the news..."

"We're in a mass medium and I don't think that Shakespeare has a mass appeal..."

"Look at 'Dennis the Menace'. It got its biggest rating when 'Macbeth' was placed opposite it. They (the public) were driven to Dennis by the millions..."

"We never set out to make a show just because we think the public wants it. We do what we would like ourselves!" (The punctuation is mine.)

"Accurate? Who cares if the ratings are accurate or not. It doesn't matter."

"Well, we have to be measured by something..."

A member of the audience asked the panel this question: "Why must you turn your creative judgment over to a machine?"

William Dozier, of "Batman," answered: "The only way you can trust your own judgment is to own a network."

And so it went—an essay on childlessness.

INDEED, THEY sounded like publishers of books for children discussing which news stories they were planning to place before the eyes of the tots this year; whether or not it might be wise to re-issue the Oz books and speculate on the popularity of new illustrations for the "Doctor Doolittle" series.

One can respect men who publish children's books for the children's audience. But who can honor men who provide children's entertainment for adults—and take themselves seriously at such a task?

Their own high evaluation of their importance gave the proceedings moments of incredible, unintentional humor. When it was over I felt difference.

Armed Forces

Staff Sergeant Donald W. Martin, whose wife, Shirley, is the daughter of John M. Boes of 16112 Van Ness, Gardena, is now on duty with the U. S. Air Force in Thailand.


The sergeant serves as an aircraft equipment technician with Air Force advisory personnel who support aerospace defense and training activities which are coordinated with the Royal Thai Air Force.

U. S. Air Force Major Adam B. O'Guin Jr., whose wife, Louise, is the daughter of Mrs. G. H. Bouma of 3232 W. 186th St., has received three awards at Ent AFB, Colo.

The major was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, and the Air Medal.

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31¢	37¢	6¢
23¢	29¢	6¢
22¢	27¢	5¢
21¢	25¢	4¢
10¢	89¢	3¢
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