American Broadcasting Company. Network competition became a three-way rivalry, on more nearly equal terms.* NBC, backed by RCA, was still the most formidable entity. But all were prosperous and potent. All eyed the postwar era.

The end of World War I had precipitated the radio-broadcasting boom. The end of World War II held similar promise for television.

* The Mutual Broadcasting System, a large group of stations exchanging programs, never achieved a truly competitive position.

PLASTIC YEARS 3

"My salad days,
When I was green in judgment."
SHAKESPEARE

Drawing by Kovarsky; © 1950 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

In 1945, as peace came, it was possible to discern an explosive set of circumstances.

Electronic assembly lines, freed from production of electronic war matériel, were ready to turn out picture tubes and television sets. Consumers, long confronted by wartime shortages and rationing, had accumulated savings and were ready to buy. Manufacturers of many kinds, ready to switch from armaments back to consumer goods, were eager to advertise. The situation awaited a catalyst, a signal. It came with surprising suddenness.

In 1945 the FCC, once more reviewing spectrum allocations, made crucial decisions. It decided to resume television licensing. And it decided, after all, to move FM "upstairs" to another part of the spectrum. The move was desperately protested by Armstrong and the FM forces: they said it would make prewar sets obsolete, antagonize their owners, saddle the industry with huge conversion costs, and delay FM for years.

But the RCA-NBC forces rejoiced. The move tended to protect the status quo in radio while providing spectrum space for the expansion of television. RCA promised sets for mid-1946.

The pace of television activity quickened. By July 1946 the FCC

had issued twenty-four new licenses. Returning servicemen with radar experience, whose knowledge was convertible to television, were snapped up by many stations. Advertising agencies were ready; many had already formed television departments and had experimented with television commercials and programming.

CBS was taken aback by the rush of events. It had expected television decisions to be held in abeyance because of unresolved issues relating to color. CBS had demonstrated a color system, which had been widely acclaimed, that offered brilliant, stable colors. But it involved a rotating wheel, and its pictures could not be seen on the existing black-and-white system, the prewar system. CBS therefore felt this system should be reconsidered; it had urged the FCC to hold off the freezing of standards. And it suggested to affiliates that they postpone television license applications, and give priority to FM.

RCA, however, was scornful of the CBS color method. In six months, Sarnoff promised the FCC, RCA engineers would demonstrate an electronic color system "compatible" with existing black-and-white sets. Asked how he knew they would have it ready, Sarnoff answered: "I told them to."

In the summer of 1946 RCA got its black-and-white sets on the market. That fall it demonstrated an electronic color system—crude and unstable but "compatible." In March 1947 the FCC shunted the CBS system aside. It postponed final color decisions, but reaffirmed a go-ahead under existing black-and-white standards. The RCA forces were exuberant. CBS, on the other hand, had suffered a major defeat.

In October of that year FCC chairman Charles Denny, who had presided over these pro-RCA decisions, resigned from the FCC to become NBC vice president and general counsel. The move brought a hue and cry: when had a network berth first been mentioned to the FCC chairman? Had the FCC decisions been made under circumstances involving a conflict of interest?

Amid such maneuvers, television fever spread again.

MOSAIC

During 1945-46, while the Washington struggles hung in the balance, programming moves were necessarily tentative, and some were curious. But wartime improvements in equipment were evident in the picture clarity. In June 1946 an NBC telecast of the Joe Louis-Billy Conn heavyweight championship prizefight caused the Washington *Post* to comment: "Television looks good for a 1000-year run."

In various branches of programming, preparatory moves were afoot. In 1945 NBC hired newsreel veteran Paul Alley, of the Hearst-MGM News of the Day, to lay the groundwork for a television news service. With little precedent to go on, the network gave him a radio-sized budget. Obtaining his first film free from the Signal Corps Pictorial Center on Long Island, Alley wrote narration himself, and hired another newsreel veteran, David Klein, at $10 a night for part-time editing. Later a small budget increase allowed Klein to become a full-time assistant. Another staff member came to them from the Office of War Information, bringing with him an $8,000 Mitchell camera which he was sure the government no longer needed. Throughout 1946—as the momentous maneuvers before the FCC moved to a climax—the "liberated" Mitchell camera was the mainstay of NBC-TV news operations.

By then it was clear that television news needed a more resolute attack, and NBC tried a strange experiment. It commissioned Jerry Fairbanks Productions, a producer of theatrical shorts and industrial films, to provide film for NBC newscasts. Later it switched to Fox Movietone, while CBS made a similar contract with Telenews, a newly formed unit related to the Hearst-MGM News of the Day. The rationale for these contracts was that the networks had news sources and voices and just needed help with pictures. The fact that the arrangements allowed the networks to postpone dealing with various film unions may also have played a part. In any case, both networks were trying to organize major newscast series.

As sets appeared on the market, taverns rushed to acquire them. They found sports events an especially powerful attraction. Wrestling was soon winning a new vogue. In every television city, groups clustered around tavern sets.

As program operations expanded, the tube was suddenly alive with activity. In January 1947 the opening of Congress was televised for the first time. In February a "blue baby" operation was televised by NBC at Johns Hopkins and witnessed on television sets by several hundred doctors and nurses. In May the *Kraft Television Theater* series, presenting a mixture of adapted classics and new plays, made its NBC debut. That summer the Zoomar lens got into action in a CBS telecast of a baseball game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Cincinnati Reds. Its ability to leap from a full-field long shot to a close-up of the pitcher working his wad of chewing tobacco caused a stir. Television entertainment for children was offered in New York by the *Howdy Doody* series, and in Chicago by *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*, which also won adult admirers. *Meet the Press*, a long-time radio fixture, made a television debut.

For the 1947-48 season both NBC and CBS won sponsors for their main newscast series. The NBC early-evening news became the *Camel News Caravan*, featuring the breezy, boutonniered John Cameron Swayze and sponsored by Camel cigarettes. CBS launched *Television News With Douglas Edwards*, which acquired Oldsmobile as sponsor. Both were 15-minute programs. Both inevitably adopted newsreel patterns. Each was likely to include several filmed items. Film came from distant places by airplane, from newsreel crews maintained in principal news centers. NBC's *Camel News Caravan*, served by Fox Movietone, used 35mm film. The CBS series, served by Telenews, used 16mm film. This was less costly, and the equipment was more maneuverable, but it was considered not quite professional.

Camel News Caravan maintained a brisk tempo. Near the end of each telecast came a moment when John Cameron Swayze exclaimed with unbounded enthusiasm: "Now let's go hopscotching the world for headlines!" What followed was a grab-bag of items that had regrettably taken place without benefit of cameras. Each event had to be dispatched, it seemed, in one sentence. Then Swayze would say: "That's the story, folks. Glad we could get together!"

NBC and CBS were setting the pace in 1947-48 programming. ABC was, for the time being, badly outdistanced.

The continuing strategy at all networks was to try to make radio profits pay the television development bill. This affected decisions on corporate structure. An NBC research department memorandum of June 18, 1946, foresaw an $8,000,000 loss from television operations over a four-year period. It felt that radio could and should be made to finance it. The memo said:

> By deducting telecasting losses from sound broadcasting profits, it is estimated that during 1946-1949 some $3.5 million could be saved on federal income taxes . . . compared with what would have to be paid if the two activities were incorporated separately.

This meant that radio, provider of funds, had to be kept going at maximum profit and minimum expense. Many unsponsored radio features fell by the wayside. Even the world-famed NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini, a creation of the late 1930's, was marked for oblivion.

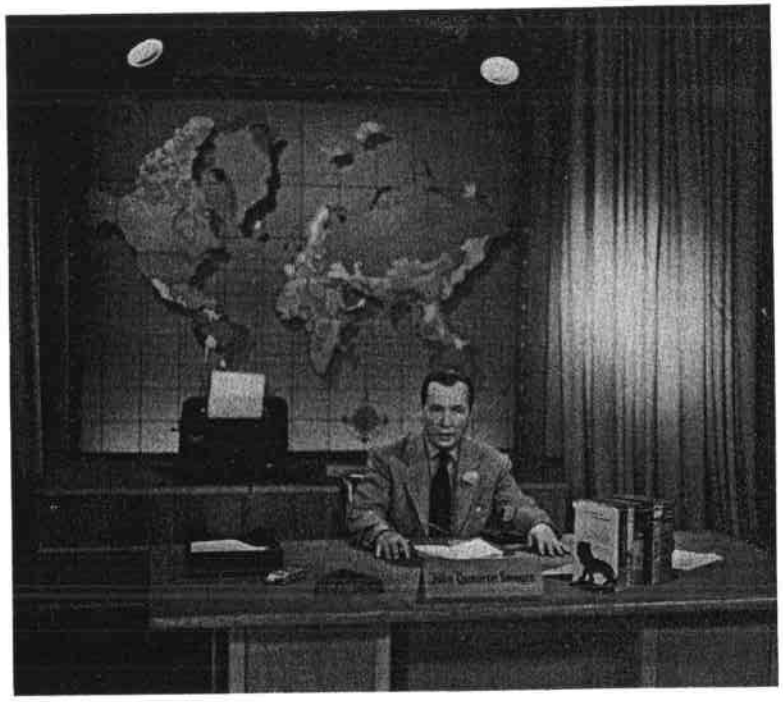
Other economies came into play. NBC and CBS, ever since their formation, had generally banned recorded programming from network use. During and after the war the advent of the wire recorder and the tape recorder had somewhat modified this policy. By 1947 the ABC network was ready to welcome the disk-jockey, and the other networks followed suit.

Meanwhile CBS scored a competitive coup. During the war the leading radio comedians, most of whom were on NBC, had paid the very high income taxes associated with the upper brackets. CBS pointed out that if such entities as "the Jack Benny program" and "the Burns & Allen program" and "the *Amos 'n' Andy* program"—which were all owned by the comedians themselves—were sold as

Kukla, Ollie, Fran—of *Kukla, Fran and Ollie.* NBC

properties, the deals would involve taxation at the low capital-gains rate. CBS was willing to make capital investments of this sort. The comedians would enjoy a bonanza at low tax rates and could also continue to receive salaries whenever broadcasting—on radio or television. CBS thus acquired control of a galaxy of leading entertainers for the television age. No one called it statesmanlike, but it was considered shrewd.

CBS and RCA became antagonists in another realm. In 1948 Columbia Records came out with the 33⅓ rpm long-playing microgroove phonograph record, RCA-Victor with the 45 rpm record. They battled hard for sovereignty in the disk-jockey world.



John Cameron Swayze. NBC

Meanwhile television license applications poured in on the FCC, and precipitated another kind of struggle. Economic dog-fights began to have an element of international political tension.

OR AFFILIATED SYMPATHETICALLY

While considering license applications, the FCC began getting unsolicited memoranda from J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Concerning a group applying for a California license, Hoover wrote:

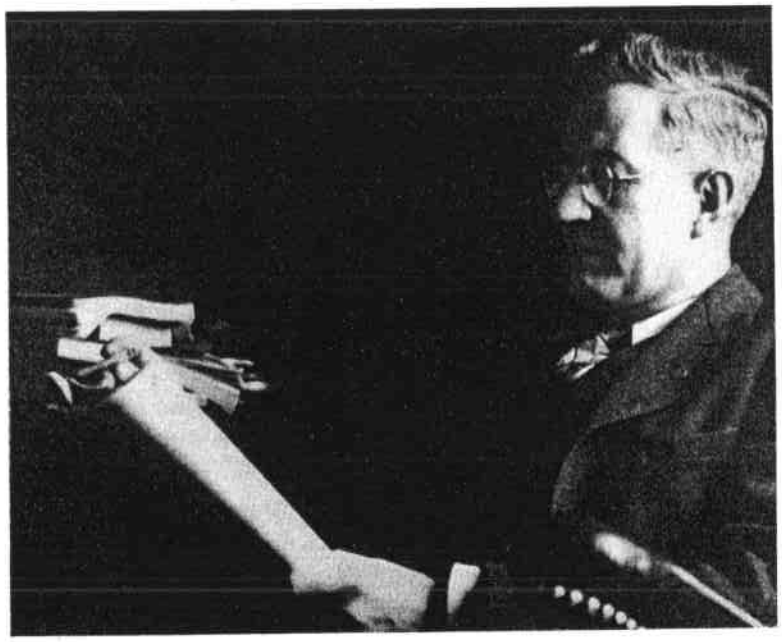
> I thought you would be interested in knowing that an examination of this list reflects that the majority of these individuals are members of the Communist Party or have affiliated themselves sympathetically with the activities of the communist movement.

The FCC asked Hoover for specific information. It pointed out that rejected applicants were by law entitled to a hearing. Could the FBI supply information that could be presented as evidence? Hoover said this would be impossible, because its sources must be kept confidential.

An FCC investigator, sent to California, reported that the people mentioned were, on the whole, well regarded. Their main political activity had been to work for the re-election of President Roosevelt. The FCC had no basis for a rejection that could be defended in court, but—nervous about the Hoover memoranda—postponed its decision for months while the applicants waited. One of the commissioners, Clifford Durr, felt that the commission's non-action—in effect, a rejection—violated the rights of the applicants. He described the circumstances in a speech to educational broadcasters. As a result, a Washington *Post* article brought the matter into the open.

FBI director Hoover was furious. He asked the FCC whether he should assume they were not interested in FBI data. The commissioners discussed his inquiry in a crisis atmosphere that reflected the awe surrounding Hoover. In these discussions Commissioner Durr argued that the FCC had no right to act on off-the-record allegations, especially of the sort submitted by the FBI—all stemming from unidentified sources—and that it should therefore not accept or consider them. But most commissioners wanted to placate Hoover, and their reply to him assured him that they valued his advice. The reply constituted a repudiation of Commissioner Durr.

The tide was running against Durr. The peace that had ended World War II, and with it the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, had also ended the homefront truce between left and right. War had been replaced by "cold war"—at home, by a hunt for



Clifford Durr.

traitors, who might be anyone, including your neighbor—probably your neighbor.

The cold-war atmosphere brought sharp divisions to government. In Congress a coalition of Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans badgered President Harry S. Truman, blocked his proposals, and charged that his administration was deeply infiltrated by communists. Truman, anxious to scotch the attacks, finally announced Executive Order No. 9835—a loyalty-security program under which, at a cost of many millions of dollars, 2,500,000 federal employees would be checked by loyalty review boards. Information from the FBI and other sources would be carefully, discreetly weighed. As a guide, Attorney General Tom Clark prepared a list of organizations he considered "subversive."

This loyalty-security survey applied only to government employees. But Clifford Durr, who at once criticized the program, asked:

> . . . will the example of government stop with government itself? Once it has been established and accepted, can its influence be kept from spreading to industry, to the press, to our schools . . . ?

The questions were answered almost before he asked them. In October 1947 the House committee on un-American activities, chaired by Representative J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, opened public hearings on "communism" in the film industry. NBC, CBS, and ABC television cameras and microphones were on hand in a caucus room of the House office building in Washington as scores of celebrities assembled under banks of floodlights, hung among crystal chandeliers. Before them sat committee members John McDowell of Pennsylvania, Richard M. Nixon of California, J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey (chairman), Richard B. Vail of Illinois, and John S. Wood of Georgia.

Chairman Thomas, in his opening, spoke of the propaganda power of film and the need to study infiltration by those "whose loyalty is pledged in word and deed to the interests of a foreign power."

After this opening with its implication of treason, the hearings seemed determined for a time to descend into farce. Jack L. Warner, setting the tone, described how communist propaganda was injected into films; writers did so by "poking fun at our political system" and picking on rich men. There was also, he said, "the routine of the Indians and the colored folks. That is always their setup." Producer Sam Wood likewise felt that communist writers worked by portraying bankers and senators as "heavies." Mrs. Lela Rogers, mother of Ginger Rogers, identified the film *None But the Lonely Heart* as communistic; to prove her point she quoted *Hollywood Reporter*, which had found the picture "pitched in a low key . . . moody and somber throughout, in the Russian manner."

But the comedy was merely preliminary. The climax of the show focused on ten writers—"unfriendly" witnesses who appeared under subpoena and were questioned before the cameras about membership in various organizations. All refused to discuss memberships of any sort, whether in the Communist Party or the Screen Writers Guild, and cited constitutional guarantees of free speech and assembly.

The first result seemed to be a closing of ranks in Hollywood. Speeches and resolutions supported the writers and criticized the House committee. But suddenly the show of courage collapsed. On November 24, 1947, a group of top film executives met at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York and decided that, for the safety of the industry, the "unfriendly" writers had to be cleaned out. Because of legal barriers to firing employees on political grounds, they were "suspended without pay." On the same day they were charged in Washington with contempt of Congress, because of their refusal to answer committee questions. All went to prison.* Hollywood entered a period of fear. Political discussion tended to vanish, but silence itself could seem suspicious. The patrioteering speech was much in evidence. A blacklist developed.

The broadcasting world was next. In the latter months of 1947, broadcasting executives and sponsors in the New York area began receiving copies of a publication called *Counterattack: The Newsletter of Facts on Communism.* It was published by three former FBI agents—Theodore C. Kirkpatrick, Kenneth M. Bierly, and John G. Keenan—who called themselves American Business Consultants. At an office on Madison Avenue they had assembled back files of the *Daily Worker*, *New Masses*, and other publications, along with programs of rallies, fund-raising appeals, organization letterheads, and other documents. The newsletter warned business-

* Two went to the same prison as chairman J. Parnell Thomas, who had meanwhile been convicted of conspiracy to defraud the government with mythical names on his payroll and other fraudulent practices, in which he was found to have engaged from 1940 to 1948.

men ceaselessly against infiltration by "commies," "subversives," "pinks," "dupes," "stooges," "fifth columnists," "quislings," "appeasers," "fronters"—terms used interchangeably. All "helped communism." They should be ostracized, eliminated from employment, treated as traitors. *Counterattack* provided lists of names. At first it dealt with various business fields, but the broadcasting industry soon became its main concern.

Its method was to list artists with "citations" of their "front" activities. A *Counterattack* citation might say that the *Daily Worker* had reported Actor X as attending a meeting of Organization Y, considered subversive. *Counterattack* did not check whether the artist *had* attended the meeting. If he hadn't, said Theodore Kirkpatrick in a radio interview, "that person has recourse to the *Daily Worker*."

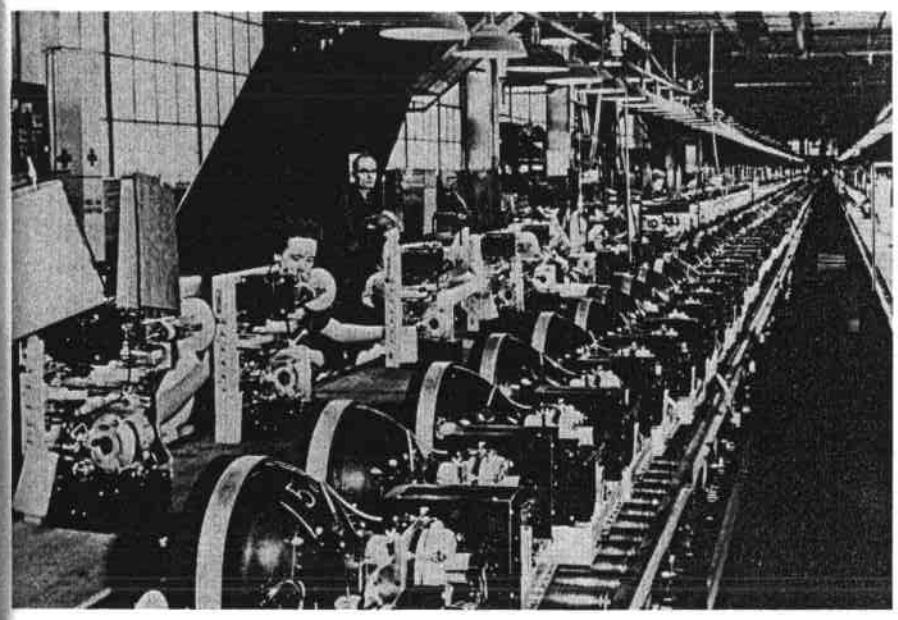
Counterattack "citations" went far beyond the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations. The newsletter listed 192 organizations it considered "fronts"; the Attorney General had only seventy-three on his list.

American Business Consultants had been started on $15,000 provided by Alfred Kohlberg, an importer who was an ardent Chiang Kai-shek supporter and a backer of various anti-communist projects including newsletters. The broadcasting industry in 1948 was deriving $616,500,000 from the sale of time, in radio and television. That a $15,000 company could exert a lot of leverage on a $616,500,000 industry soon became clear.

FREEZE

Harry S. Truman at the start of 1948 seemed a lonely figure. The witchhunt clamor, which he had hoped to still with his loyalty-security program, had instead been fanned by it, and seemed about to engulf him. But Truman was a scrapper.

The Republican and Democratic parties both chose Philadelphia



1949: TV tubes roll from assembly lines. National Archives

for their 1948 conventions, and for the same reason—television. It was on the AT&T co-axial cable that by now linked New York and Washington, and by mid-summer was expected to feed programs to fourteen eastern stations. According to Roger W. Clipp of WFIL-TV, Philadelphia, these would reach a television audience of millions.

That summer Harry S. Truman became the first President to sit in the White House and watch the nomination of his rival on television. Truman saw the Republicans nominate Thomas E. Dewey and Earl Warren. The Democrats nominated Truman and Alben Barkley. Two splinter parties also entered the field. The States' Rights Democrats, who repudiated Truman because of his interest in civil rights, nominated Strom Thurmond; the Progressives, who

felt Truman had intensified the cold war, nominated Henry Wallace, a former Vice President under Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Truman made the surprising decision to de-emphasize broadcasting in his campaign. Broadcasters had "sold out to the special interests," he said. In his speeches he kept referring to the "kept press and paid radio." He decided instead on a herculean barn-storming drive in which he assailed the Republicans in salty terms. This was totally unlike the lofty addresses Dewey was delivering on radio and television; crowds swarmed to hear Truman. "Give 'em hell, Harry!" they shouted. The advertising agency for the Republicans, Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, urged on Dewey a barrage of spot announcements, but he vetoed the idea and stuck to the speeches. As broadcast entertainment the 1948 campaign was an outstanding failure. But almost all polls agreed that Dewey would win.

On election night an exhausted Truman went to bed early. In the middle of the night he woke up, turned on the radio, and heard H. V. Kaltenborn saying, in his clipped tones, that Truman was ahead, but that it did not mean anything; he could not win.

Next day, after Dewey had conceded, Truman imitated H. V. Kaltenborn for the reporters. It was a smash hit. The vote ran: Truman, 24,105,812; Dewey, 21,970,065. In the electoral vote it was: Truman, 303; Dewey, 189; Thurmond, 39.

Thus Truman retained the White House. But an antagonistic Congress made it one of the most frustrating of presidencies. Throughout 1948-52 the witchhunt atmosphere continued, and increased in ferocity. The word *treason* was its keynote.

These were also the formative years for television. Its program patterns, business practices, and institutions were being shaped. Evolving from a radio industry born under military influence and reared by big business, it now entered an adolescence traumatized by phobias. It would learn caution, and cowardice.

It was, in another respect, a very special period for television. Late in 1948 the FCC, having issued approximately a hundred tele-

1949: television sets make first appearance in Sears, Roebuck catalogue.

vision licenses, called a sudden halt. Interference problems had to be studied. A television "freeze" was declared. The Korean War, breaking out in 1950, became a reason for keeping the freeze, which lasted three and a half years.

Thus 1948-52 was a strange television period—a laboratory period. New York and Los Angeles, each with seven stations, saw television in full operation. Some major cities—Austin, Texas; Little Rock, Arkansas; Portland, Maine; Portland, Oregon—had no television at all. Most other cities had only one station.

Because of this spotty distribution, advertisers who wanted national coverage were inclined to keep their radio network series.

At the same time, the "television cities" provided a priceless opportunity for testing and observing. Throughout the freeze, spon-

sors, advertising agencies, and leaders of other media closely watched the "television cities" for portents of the future.

Soon the portents were eloquent—or frightening—in their implications. Among stories of the hour was the experience of the lipstick maker Hazel Bishop. Doing a $50,000 annual business, the company took up television in 1950; solely through television, its sales zoomed to $4,500,000 in 1952 and continued upward.

Television cities saw signs of economic earthquake and drastic changes of habit. In 1951 almost all television cities reported a 20 to 40 per cent drop in movie attendance. In non-television cities, movie attendance continued unchanged, or grew.

Areas well provided with television reported movie theater closings in waves: 70 closings in eastern Pennsylvania, 134 in southern California, 61 in Massachusetts, 64 in the Chicago area, 55 in metropolitan New York. The rise of outdoor drive-in theaters was a factor, but television was considered the main cause.

A sharp decline at sports events was seen in most television cities, although wrestling, a prominent television feature, was doing well. Effective handling of television rights was clearly a life-or-death matter for professional sports.

Restaurants and night clubs felt the impact. A variety series starring Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, launched in 1949—later titled *Your Show of Shows*—became a Saturday terror to restaurateurs. It made people rush home early. Television had briefly drawn people to taverns, but now home sets kept them home. Cities saw a drop in taxicab receipts. Jukebox receipts were down. Public libraries, including the New York Public Library, reported a drop in book circulation, and many book stores reported sales down. Radio listening was off in television cities; the Bob Hope rating dropped from 23.8 in 1949 to 12.7 in 1951 and continued downward. The freeze kept sponsors on hand but the omens were frightening.

For the film world they were equally so. And to the terrifying statistics, a new horror was now added.

Sid Caesar—on *Your Show of Shows.* Max Liebman Productions

PANIC CITY

On the heels of the television statistics, a staggering blow descended on Hollywood: the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *United States* v. *Paramount et al.*

The defendants were the eight companies that had controlled the industry: Paramount, Loew's (including Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), RKO, Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures, Universal, United Artists. The Supreme Court—climaxing years of litigation—agreed with lower courts that the defendants

had kept out foreign products and prevented domestic competition by control over theaters. The court now ordered an end to block booking and demanded "divorcement" of theater holdings from production and distribution; it left it to lower courts to work out details. This ushered in a series of consent decrees that—unbelievably—wrote *fade out* to the story of the Big Studios—those self-contained grand duchies that had been a way of life and had symbolized Hollywood. That old Hollywood was suddenly dead.

Convulsions shook the town. Fearing they could not unload 400 to 500 films per year on theaters no longer controlled, the major companies began to slash production schedules and cancel long-term contracts with actors, producers, directors, writers, technicians. A new reign of fear merged with the blacklist terror. No job seemed safe. Every day brought ominous television news and the rolling of heads.

The splitting of the big companies began almost at once. Loew-MGM delayed longest, whistling in the dark. Paramount split promptly into two companies—Paramount Pictures Corporation and United Paramount Theaters. By 1951 United Paramount Theaters was negotiating a merger with the ABC network. To the merger Paramount could bring substantial working capital—and a business of uncertain future. ABC could bring less working capital—and an apparently glowing future. The merger foreshadowed a more spirited competition among networks.

Hosts of artists, set adrift by Hollywood, began to eye the television tube. Some headed for New York. It had been, since the 1920's, the production capital for radio, and many assumed that it would have the same role in relation to television. Joining the migration were numerous fugitives from other media—newspapers, magazines, theater, nightclub, lecture hall. It was a struggle for footholds, a time for trial and error, success and failure. Amid a confusion of migrations and an atmosphere of upheaval, program experiments came and went.

Texaco Star Theater, 1949: Milton Berle is welcomed back for second season. NBC

IT WILL BE A GREAT SHOW

Among variety hours launched in 1948 were two smash successes.

One was *Texaco Star Theater* with Milton Berle. He acquired the names "Uncle Miltie" and "Mr. Television." He was brash, uninhibited, and liked to cavort in funny clothes. He had never been successful in radio, but was soon regarded as the embodiment of television comedy. He was impertinent, but never politically risky.

Another variety entry was *Toast of the Town*, headed by Ed Sullivan as producer and master of ceremonies, and later known as the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Ed Sullivan occasionally took chances—at first.

The variety show formula, which had given Rudy Vallee a sixteen-year run on radio, was a promising one. Sullivan, a New York *Daily News* columnist, could give performers extra rewards with column items. He went after the biggest names and assembled impressive aggregations. Though he himself was kidded for his unsmiling face and awkwardly dangling arms, his program gathered momentum and soon reached the top in television ratings in several cities.* It acquired the Ford Motor Company as sponsor and began to look like big business. "Ed Sullivan will last," said Oscar Levant, "as long as other people have talent." As the series prospered, even Sullivan's performing deficiencies became assets. He became a man mimicked on amateur hours: in short, one of the great.

Late in 1949 Sullivan booked dancer Paul Draper for a *Toast of the Town* appearance in January 1950. This was, to an extent, a courageous act. An appearance by Draper and harmonica player Larry Adler in Greenwich, Connecticut, had recently called forth a campaign of letter-writing led by a Mrs. Hester McCullough of Greenwich, wife of a *Time* picture editor—abetted by Hearst columnist Igor Cassini, who wrote as "Cholly Knickerbocker." Mrs. McCullough, who had for some time been interested in the hunt for subversives—"I guess you might say I was always on the lookout for them"—demanded that the Greenwich appearance be canceled. She called Draper and Adler "pro-communist in sympathy" and said that any such person "should be treated as a traitor." Draper and Adler issued a statement, carried by the Associated Press, saying that they were not and never had been communists, members of the Communist Party, pro-communists or traitors, and that they owed and gave allegiance "solely to the United States under the Constitution." They filed suit against Mrs. McCullough. The Greenwich appearance proceeded without incident. Draper and Adler appeared to have weathered the storm. Under these circumstances Sullivan booked Draper for *Talk of the Town*. It appeared a further vindication.

* *Pulse* surveys, making local reports in a number of cities, showed Sullivan in first place in New York and Philadelphia by the end of 1948.

But "Cholly Knickerbocker," along with other Hearst columnists—George Sokolsky and Westbrook Pegler—and various newsletters, took up the battle again and demanded that the Ford Motor Company cancel the scheduled television appearance.

The Ford Motor Company and its advertising agency, Kenyon & Eckhardt, held nervous meetings and decided to go ahead with the Draper appearance. The possibility of a lawsuit was a factor in the decision.

The columnists and newsletters, continuing their protests, managed to call forth on the Ford Motor Company a barrage of 1294 angry letters and telegrams in response to the telecast. As in mary such campaigns, there were duplicates. Clusters came from the same post office. Most letters echoed published attacks. Eight per cent said that "leftists" and "pinks" should be sent back to Stalin. Thirteen per cent said that communism threatened Western civilization. The mail caused enough anguish to produce further meetings between sponsor and agency, in which it was decided that Ed Sullivan should send a letter to William B. Lewis, president of Kenyon & Eckhardt—a letter which was drafted for the purpose by public relations counsel. It also served as a press release.

January 25, 1950

Dear Bill:

I am deeply distressed to find out that some people were offended by the appearance, on Sunday's *Toast of the Town* television show, of a performer whose political beliefs are a matter of controversy. That is most unfortunate. You know how bitterly opposed I am to communism and all it stands for. You also know how strongly I would oppose having the program used as a political forum, directly or indirectly.

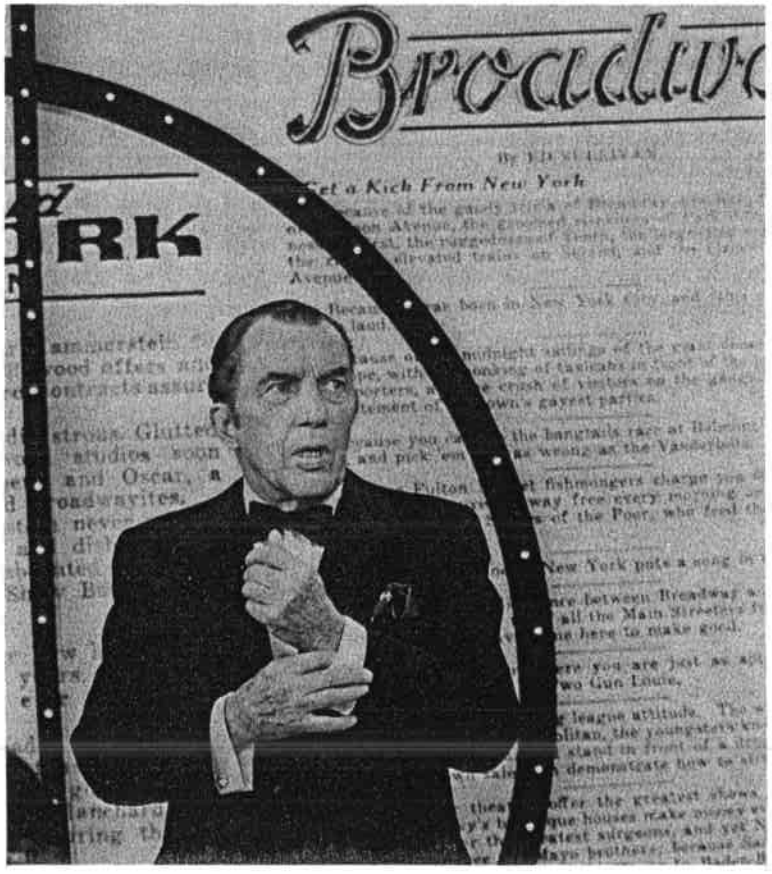
After all, the whole point of the *Toast of the Town* is to entertain people, not offend them. . . . If anybody has taken offense, it is the last thing I wanted or anticipated, and I am sorry.

I just want *Toast of the Town* to be the best show on television. I know that's what you and the sponsor want, too. Tell everybody

SULLIVAN

Ed Sullivan brings the Beatles to American television. CBS

Ed Sullivan, columnist–and television host 1948-71. CBS



to tune in again next Sunday night, and if I can get in a plug, it will be a great show–better than ever.

Sincerely,
Ed Sullivan

Kenyon & Eckhardt, while assuring their sponsor that the incident had not damaged the Ford Motor Company, promised to do everything possible to prevent other such incidents.

Paul Draper found he could no longer earn a living in the United States and went to live in Europe.* Ed Sullivan began to turn to Theodore Kirkpatrick of *Counterattack* for guidance. Liaison between Sullivan and Kirkpatrick became "extremely close." In case of doubt about any artist, Sullivan now checked with Kirkpatrick. If the entertainer seemed to have "explaining to do," and Sullivan still wanted to use him, he would get Kirkpatrick and the artist together to see if things could be ironed out. Sullivan seemed anxious to proclaim this closeness. He told his column readers on June 21, 1950:

> Kirkpatrick has sat in my living room on several occasions and listened attentively to performers eager to secure a certification of loyalty. On some occasions, after interviewing them, he has given them the green light; on other occasions, he has told them: "Veterans' organizations will insist on further proof."

Sullivan asserted that *Counterattack* was doing "a magnificent American job." In this same column he gave readers some advance inside information: a "bombshell" was about to be dropped into the offices of networks, advertising agencies, and sponsors. It would be a book exposing a conspiracy.

It appeared the following day.

HANDY REFERENCE

On the paper cover of the 215-page *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* was a red hand clos-

* The lawsuit against Mrs. McCullough ended in a hung jury.

ing on a microphone. The title page reported the book to be the work of American Business Consultants, publishers of *Counterattack*.

The introduction said: ". . . the Cominform and the Communist Party USA now rely more on radio and TV than on the press and motion pictures as 'belts' to transmit pro-Sovietism to the American public." The book was offered as a portrait of the infiltration carried out for this purpose—by order, it was implied, from abroad.

Setting the stage with such words, *Red Channels* listed 151 people—alphabetically arranged for easy reference—with "citations."

The list was enough to bring gasps. Advance hints from *Counterattack* and columnists had made the industry expect revelations of insidious underground activity. What they received was a list of 151 of the most talented and admired people in the industry—mostly writers, directors, performers. They were people who had helped make radio an honored medium, and who were becoming active in television. Many had played a prominent role in wartime radio, and had been articulators of American war aims.

In short, it was a roll of honor.*

* The total list: Larry Adler, Luther Adler, Stella Adler, Edith Atwater, Howard Bay, Ralph Bell, Leonard Bernstein, Walter Bernstein, Michael Blankfort, Marc Blitzstein, True Boardman, Millen Brand, Oscar Brand, J. Edward Bromberg, Himan Brown, John Brown, Abe Burrows, Morris Carnovsky, Vera Caspary, Edward Chodorov, Jerome Chodorov, Mady Christians, Lee J. Cobb, Marc Connelly, Aaron Copland, Norman Corwin, Howard Da Silva, Roger De Koven, Dean Dixon, Olin Downes, Alfred Drake, Paul Draper, Howard Duff, Clifford J. Durr, Richard Dyer-Bennett, José Ferrer, Louise Fitch, Martin Gabel, Arthur Gaeth, William S. Gailmor, John Garfield, Will Geer, Jack Gilford, Tom Glazer, Ruth Gordon, Lloyd Gough, Morton Gould, Shirley Graham, Ben Grauer, Mitchell Grayson, Horace Grenell, Uta Hagen, Dashiell Hammett, E. Y. Harburg, Robert P. Heller, Lillian Hellman, Nat Hiken, Rose Hobart, Judy Holliday, Roderick B. Holmgren, Lena Horne, Langston Hughes, Marsha Hunt, Leo Hurwitz, Charles Irving, Burl Ives, Sam Jaffe, Leon Janney, Joe Julian, Garson Kanin, George Keane, Donna Keath, Pert Kelton, Alexander Kendrick, Adelaide Klein, Felix Knight, Howard Koch, Tony Kraber, Millard

To many observers the list seemed a preposterous hoax. The "citations" strengthened this impression. They gave a summary of what these men and women—with countless others—had been concerned with over the years. They had opposed Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini, tried to help war refugees, combated race discrimination, campaigned against poll taxes and other voting barriers, opposed censorship, criticized the House committee on un-American activities, hoped for peace, and favored efforts toward better U.S.-Soviet relations. Most had been New Deal supporters. The book could be seen as a move to pillory the liberal impulses of two decades as traitorous—and perhaps to control the course of television.

But it was scarcely an era given to calm appraisal. During the previous months a series of events had shocked Americans. The Soviet Union had detonated an atom bomb, the Chinese communists had won control of mainland China, eleven Communist Party leaders in the United States had been sentenced to jail, and former Assistant Secretary of State Alger Hiss had been convicted of perjury —after denying the passing of government documents to Whittaker Chambers. In addition, U.S. Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin had been seizing headlines with claims that he knew of scores of "card-carrying" communists in the State Department,

Lampell, John Latouche, Arthur Laurents, Gypsy Rose Lee, Madeline Lee, Ray Lev, Philip Loeb, Ella Logan, Alan Lomax, Avon Long, Joseph Losey, Peter Lyon, Aline MacMahon, Paul Mann, Margo, Myron McCormick, Paul McGrath, Burgess Meredith, Arthur Miller, Henry Morgan, Zero Mostel, Jean Muir, Meg Mundy, Lynn Murray, Ben Myers, Dorothy Parker, Arnold Perl, Minerva Pious, Samson Raphaelson, Bernard Reis, Anne Revere, Kenneth Roberts, Earl Robinson, Edward G. Robinson, William N. Robson, Harold Rome, Norman Rosten, Selena Royle, Coby Ruskin, Robert St. John, Hazel Scott, Pete Seeger, Lisa Sergio, Artie Shaw, Irwin Shaw, Robert Lewis Shayon, Ann Shepherd, William L. Shirer, Allan Sloane, Howard K. Smith, Gale Sondergaard, Hester Sondergaard, Lionel Stander, Johannes Steel, Paul Stewart, Elliot Sullivan, William Sweets, Helen Tamiris, Betty Todd, Louis Untermeyer, Hilda Vaughn, J. Raymond Walsh, Sam Wanamaker, Theodore Ward, Fredi Washington, Margaret Webster, Orson Welles, Josh White, Ireene Wicker, Betty Winkler, Martin Wolfson, Lesley Woods, Richard Yaffe.

members of a "spy ring," whose names were—he said—known to the Secretary of State but who were still "shaping the policy of the State Department." If such things were possible, was *Red Channels* strange?

Within days after *Red Channels* the Korean war broke out. Broadcasting executives were suddenly thumbing the pages of *Red Channels* against a background not of peace but of war.

The unbelievable nature of the *Red Channels* list multiplied its impact. Every *Counterattack* subscriber received a copy; a few others went on sale in stores at $1 a copy. Most copies disappeared quickly into the drawers of executive desks at networks, advertising agencies, and sponsors. Few people discussed its contents openly. If they spoke of it, they seldom mentioned who was listed. Artists, even those listed, seldom saw a copy. Many of those listed did not know about it for weeks. Some began to guess it from the changed behavior of friends, or from the fact that producers no longer accepted their phone calls. For many, results were more sudden and drastic.

The Aldrich Family after eleven seasons on radio was scheduled to start a television version on NBC in the summer of 1950. The Young & Rubicam advertising agency held auditions, chose screen star Jean Muir for the role of the mother, and announced it in a press release three days before the scheduled premiere—Sunday, August 27.

Then Jean Muir was suddenly notified that the opening telecast had been postponed a week. Later she was told her contract was being canceled: a cash settlement was offered. It was learned that General Foods executives had received a barrage of phone calls protesting the Muir casting. The firing had been decided at the highest echelons of the company. Her husband, an attorney, urged her to accept the settlement. The event was reported in newspapers throughout the country, with mention of the *Red Channels* listing.

Jean Muir flatly denied association with four of the nine organizations listed in her *Red Channels* entry. She dimly remembered

wartime appearances at two others. Three "citations" she admitted and avowed. One was the signing of a cable of congratulations to the Moscow Art Theater on its fiftieth anniversary. A student of the Stanislavski acting method, she had rejoiced in the opportunity to join in this message. But such matters were not an issue. General Foods made no investigations, asked no explanations, claimed no disloyalty on her part. It merely asserted the need to avoid "controversial" people on programs it sponsored.

Shortly after the Jean Muir episode a newly launched television version of *The Goldbergs*, sponsored on CBS by Sanka, was subjected to protests over another *Red Channels* listee, Philip Loeb, who played Jake. A stand by Mrs. Berg—author, star, and owner of the series—for a time prevented a firing, but the sponsor dropped the series "for economic reasons" a few months later. After an interval the series reappeared on NBC under another sponsor and without Loeb. He was reported to have received a settlement. Mrs. Berg told the New York *Times:* "Philip Loeb has stated categorically that he is not and has never been a communist. I believe him. There is no dispute between Philip Loeb and myself." The Loeb case was widely reported. His radio and television work ceased. His theater appearances were harassed. He eventually took an overdose of sleeping pills.

After the Muir and Loeb cases, dismissals were handled more quietly, avoiding headlines. But the cases went on. Scores of artists vanished from radio and television.

John G. Keenan, co-founder of American Business Consultants, conceded that some listees should not have been listed. But he said the "innocent" could always come forward and "clear" themselves. Many artists seem to have visited the office of *Counterattack* for such clearance. Most did not wish to plead for "clearance." One said: "I don't want to have anything to do with pigmies playing God." So *Red Channels* extended its sway, which soon received a new form of support.

CRUSADE IN THE SUPERMARKETS

Mrs. Eleanor Johnson Buchanan of Syracuse, New York, whose father owned four supermarkets, read *Counterattack* and *Red Channels,* and became an anti-communist crusader. When her husband went to Korea with the marines, she busied herself with protest letters and speeches against "red sympathizers on radio and television." Her father, Laurence A. Johnson, the supermarket owner, helped her with mimeographing and mailing, and gradually took over leadership in the work.

Johnson, in addition to owning supermarkets, was elected to office in the National Association of Supermarkets, and this enabled him to give the impression—few wanted to test it—that he had influence over thousands of outlets throughout the country. An elderly man of imposing presence, he slipped easily into patriotic talk. Many people considered him naïve, but he devised a canny technique for bringing pressure on sponsors.

One of the most successful early television drama series was *Danger*, launched by CBS in 1950. It acquired as sponsor the Block Drug Company, maker of Amm-i-dent, a chlorophyll toothpaste. When Johnson learned that *Danger* used actors listed by *Counterattack*, he wrote a long letter to Mr. Block the sponsor, calling attention to the casting and making an offer.

He would display Amm-i-dent and its chlorophyll competitor Chlorodent side by side at his supermarkets. In front of each display would be a sign. The Chlorodent sign would say that its manufacturer, Lever Brothers, was using only pro-American artists and shunning "Stalin's little creatures." The Amm-i-dent sign, to be written by the Block Drug Company itself, would explain why its programs chose communist fronters. Johnson's letter asked: "Would not the results of such a test be of the utmost value to the thousands of supermarkets throughout America . . . ?"

As a final touch Johnson added: "This letter will be held await-

ing your answer for a few days. Then copies will be sent to the following . . ." Here he added a list that included the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Catholic War Veterans, the Super Market Institute in Chicago, and other organizations—a list raising a specter of national obloquy.

The offers of such "polls" and the phrase "Stalin's little creatures" became trademarks of Johnson campaigns. His letters were reinforced by phone calls and frequent visits to sponsors and advertising agencies. That these made an impression is suggested by testimonial letters that Johnson was soon able to exhibit, all praising his patriotic achievements. The president of the General Ice Cream Corporation wrote him: "I think it is wonderful that you have taken this interest in ferreting communists out of the entertainment industry." A Kraft vice president wrote: "It is indeed heartening to know that you are continuing your crusade."

When he started on his zealous campaigns, Johnson felt he needed help from inside-information experts, and he eventually turned to a rising star in the blacklist field—Vincent Hartnett.

A former navy intelligence officer, Hartnett had later worked on the *Gangbusters* series, but digressed into work as a subversive-activities consultant, gathering his own files on the affiliations of artists. He wrote, on a freelance basis, the introduction to *Red Channels*. Offering his services to sponsors, agencies, and networks, he acquired the Borden Company, Lever Brothers, the Young & Rubicam agency, the Kudner agency, and the ABC network as clients. He began to advertise himself as "the nation's top authority on communism and communications." His collaboration with Laurence Johnson augmented the power of both. Johnson kept recommending Hartnett to food and drug companies to keep them out of difficulties. Hartnett watched casting announcements and fed Johnson up-to-date information on suitable targets.

In 1950, foods, drugs, cleaning products, and toiletries—items sold through supermarkets—accounted for over 60 per cent of the

revenue of the broadcasting industry. This was the force in the Laurence Johnson whipsaw operation. To sponsors, agencies, networks, Laurence Johnson became a bane and a salvation. He was their justification. They loathed and needed him. Executives who felt foolish knuckling under to letters and phone calls found in Johnson a certified demonstration in economic—i.e. respectable—terms. He was *proof* that what they were doing was stark necessity and that the alternative was ruin. The broadcasting world was itself a sort of supermarket, where the voice from the supermarket was readily understood.

Only one further step was needed to complete the blacklist structure. Networks and agencies grew weary of being attacked and decided to take charge of the whole business themselves. Blacklist administration became part of the built-in machinery of the industry.

CBS, which in 1950 established a sort of loyalty oath, followed this in 1951 with the appointment of an executive specializing in security. At NBC the legal department assumed similar duties. Large advertising agencies acquired special security officers under various titles. Some agencies continued to employ Kirkpatrick, Hartnett, and others, but during the early 1950's the kingpins of the structure became the hush-hush officials at networks and large agencies.

Mysterious protocol was devised to veil their work. Producers had to submit to superiors the names of writers, actors, and directors being considered. A copy was routed to the security chief. A phone call later conveyed approvals or disapprovals. Memoranda and face-to-face meetings were avoided. The voice at the other end would go down the list of proposed names with "Yes," "No," "Yes," "Yes," "No." Questions were not to be asked. Rituals were prescribed for staff producers and independent producers alike. David Susskind, who plunged into television early as a "packager"—producing *Armstrong Circle Theater*, *Appointment for Adventure*, *Justice*, and many other series—testified on one occasion about his relations with Young & Rubicam. For one series he made "ten or fifteen" phone calls daily to the agency to check names. About five

thousand name checks were made during a year. A third of the names, "perhaps a little higher," were rejected. He had to agree never to tell an actor why he could not be used. If a reason was needed, it must be "not tall enough," or "the leading man is too short." Each time an actor was used, he had to be checked again. Even children had to be checked. An eight-year-old daughter of a controversial father was banned; Susskind had to find "another child whose father was all right."

Among networks, CBS was especially zealous in institutionalizing blacklisting. There was an irony in this. CBS had been particularly noted for the vigor and range of its programming; the new development seemed, in fact, a by-product of the very policies that had won high regard for its work. The CBS rise of the 1930's had developed around news and the drama of ideas. At a time when NBC dominated the air with vaudeville comedians and singers, clung to established formulae, and avoided deviant ideas, CBS had welcomed the ferment of the Depression and thereby made its mark—and also made itself a happy hunting ground for blacklisters. CBS, reacting, had become purge headquarters—at precisely the time when it was taking over the NBC comedians. The networks appeared to be switching roles.

The blacklist gradually dropped out of the headlines but remained a felt presence. Drama plots were affected. In mystery stories bankers and businessmen were no longer useful characters because they could not be suspects. Numerous topics had become dangerous. But one subject was always safe: law and order.

CRIME AUTOMATED

Many of the early television drama programs were of the "episodic series" type—in which one or more characters ran through the series, but each episode was complete in itself. The formula, derived from radio, allowed many writers to contribute. Some episodic series were family series, like the *Aldrich Family*, but most were in the law-and-order category: *Martin Kane, Private Eye; Mr. District Attorney; Man Against Crime*. Reliance on formula gave a certain editorial security.

Man Against Crime, starring Ralph Bellamy, premiered in 1949 and soon achieved high ratings. It seemed set for a long run. In the radio tradition, it was produced by an advertising agency, William Esty; the program staff worked from the Esty office. Freelance writers came and went; fifty different writers in due time contributed to the series.

In 1949 all such programs were produced *live*. Produced in this way, *Man Against Crime* cost $10,000 to $15,000 per program; a writer usually got $500 to $700. The live-production dominance was expected to continue. Both Sarnoff of RCA and Paley of CBS were said to be determined that it should.

The fact that *local* schedules were using a lot of film—mostly old westerns and gangster films, not from the major Hollywood studios—was not considered significant. In radio, local programming had always had a similar dependence on recordings; yet network radio in its heyday had remained live. This was expected to be the pattern in television.

While following a radio pattern, *Man Against Crime* faced television problems. In radio the length of a play could be gauged by counting words—it usually ran 140 to 150 words a minute. Television timing, because of action intervals, was a trickier problem. From one rehearsal to another, the length varied considerably.

On *Man Against Crime* the problem was solved by requiring writers to include a "search scene" near the end of each program. The hero-investigator would search a room for a special clue. A signal would tell Ralph Bellamy how long to search. If time was short, he could go straight to the desk where the clue was hidden; if there was need to stall, he could first tour the room, look under sofa cushions, and even take time to rip them open.

The CBS studio in the Grand Central Terminal building where

Man Against Crime was produced was under unceasing pressure. Here the cast had only one full rehearsal with cameras and lights. Earlier rehearsals were "dry runs" in offices or rented ballrooms. During the studio rehearsal, work might be in progress on sets for other programs.

Man Against Crime was sponsored by Camel cigarettes. This affected both writing and direction. Mimeographed instructions told writers:

> Do not have the heavy or any disreputable person smoking a cigarette. Do not associate the smoking of cigarettes with undesirable scenes or situations plot-wise.

Cigarettes had to be smoked gracefully, never puffed nervously. A cigarette was never given to a character to "calm his nerves," since this might suggest a narcotic effect. Writers received numerous plot instructions:

> It has been found that we retain audience interest best when our story is concerned with murder. Therefore, although other crimes may be introduced, somebody must be murdered, preferably early, with the threat of more violence to come.

The hero, said the instructions, "MUST be menaced early and often." Violence, if on-camera, was very briefly staged; one good blow or shot might suffice. Physical struggle was hardly feasible amid flimsy sets.

Although "other crimes" could be used as plot elements, arson was not one of them. Fires were not to be mentioned because they might remind a viewer of fires caused by cigarettes.

No one could cough on *Man Against Crime*. Romance, or the possibility of it, was as essential as violence. A plot had to include "at least one attractive woman." A passing romance for the hero was encouraged, "but don't let it stop the forward motion of the story." Doctors could be shown only in "the most commendable light." There were rumors of a coming report on health effects of smoking—a report of this sort had appeared in Britain—and this

made the sponsor increasingly nervous about antagonizing doctors. Since doctors tended to take a dim view of fictional doctors, it seemed best to avoid doctors. On *Man Against Crime* it was usually someone other than a doctor who said, "He's dead." It took only a moment.

Before anyone was hired, his or her name had to be checked by phone with a designated agency division for a "yes" or "no."

The writer had to limit action to five sets, one of which had to be the "fashionable" Manhattan apartment from which the hero-investigator worked. Before the middle commercial, action had to "rise to a cliff-hanger." Costume changes were difficult and unwelcome. Between scenes Ralph Bellamy was always rushing from set to set. Transitions between scenes were sometimes eased by use of a film clip, as of traffic or a subway train.

With episodic series proliferating, groups rehearsing throughout the city, and artists and technicians converging for the briefest of studio run-throughs, the pressures on all were brutal. Possibilities for error were huge. By 1951 sponsor and producer began to doubt the sanity of the arrangements. That year a new phenomenon added to their doubts. Among Hollywood cast-offs who had decided on a television gamble were Lucille Ball and her husband Desi Arnaz. Their series *I Love Lucy*, filmed in a fringe Hollywood studio, began in 1951 and by the following year was a leader in the Nielsen ratings.* Within months its leadership was challenged by still another filmed entry, *Dragnet*, "based on" case histories of the Los Angeles police department. *Dragnet* had a highly mobile style, with many outdoor scenes for which the Hollywood area was made to order. That same year—1952—the *Man Against Crime* group decided to "go to film"; the production was moved to a studio in the Bronx built by Thomas Edison in 1904.

* Nielsen ratings were based on mechanisms—"audimeters"—inserted in a sampling of television sets, keeping a record of stations tuned. Their use in radio had dated from 1935, but they became especially prestigious in television.

Here actors came across relics of Mary Pickford, Richard Barthelmess, Thomas Meighan. In the Bronx, production costs jumped to $20,000 to $25,000 per program for three days of shooting—two in the studio, one on location.

But if film was called for, there were better places than the Bronx. The move really foreshadowed the doom of New York's episodic series. In Hollywood the *I Love Lucy* success was stirring a rash of similar projects. It did not yet involve the major studios; they were staying aloof. Most of the series featured actors set free by the studios, and many were produced by Desilu, the company formed by Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Others emanated from Hal Roach productions, heir to a theatrical short-film tradition; Screen Gems, short-film offspring of Columbia Pictures; Ziv Television Productions, a radio syndicate branching into television; and most significantly, Revue Productions, subsidiary of the talent agency MCA.

It was not usual for a talent agent to make films on the side. Normally, talent guilds would have blocked the practice, because it involved a clear conflict of interest. MCA as agent was supposed to get the best possible terms for an artist; MCA as producer had an opposite incentive. But in a time of Hollywood panic, the readiness of MCA to finance production and provide employment was welcome, and soon mass-produced episodic series from MCA-Revue were pouring across the United States—and elsewhere. Some went into network schedules, while others were syndicated—sold on a station-by-station basis. Because AT&T's coaxial cables and relays did not yet reach all stations, syndication was a crucial source of programming.

A new element was further stimulating the film proliferation. Television, already established in Britain and Japan, was beginning in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Cuba, and was about to begin in a dozen other countries. All of them might be program markets. All were suddenly a reason for producers to plunge into filmed programming, rather than the dead-end risks of live production. All of this added to the feeling of a coming boom.

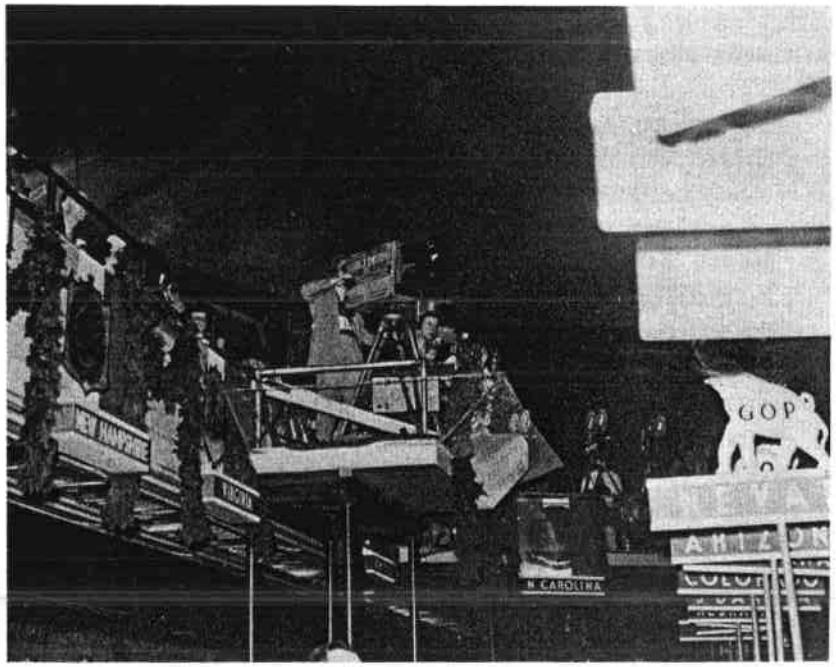
IKE AND IKON

So did another event of 1952—the presidential election.

Although radio still commanded a larger audience, television for the first time received the main attention of campaigners. Television viewers, who were watching fifteen million sets, were assumed to be "influentials."

Each network found a sponsor for its broadcasts of the 1952 party conventions and of the election returns. NBC combined them into a $3.5 million package sponsored by Westinghouse, in which Betty Furness became famous demonstrating refrigerators in live commercials. She opened and closed refrigerator doors hundreds of times before the issues were settled.

Republican convention—1952. NBC



The Republicans nominated General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower and, as his running mate, Richard M. Nixon, who had become prominent through hearings of the House committee on un-American activities. The Democrats nominated Adlai Stevenson, Governor of Illinois, and Senator John Sparkman of Alabama.

Stevenson was verbal. His speeches were eloquent, witty, polished. On television he never used a teleprompter because he always polished his speeches until the final moment, and there was never time to put them on a teleprompter. At the end of a program, the viewer's final glimpse was usually Stevenson still reading, turning a page, hurrying because he hadn't finished, but not hurrying enough. Again and again he ran over. It was the despair of his advisers.

While many responded to Stevenson's verbal brilliance, it also became a target for anti-intellectuals, who scorned his "teacup words." As the television campaign progressed, his brilliance tended to become a liability. He was waging a campaign of the radio age, but the radio age was waning. The word was battling the image, not knowing its strength.

Eisenhower was meanwhile conducting a very different television campaign. In charge—once again—was the agency Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, and it decided from the start that an Eisenhower speech for a half-hour program must be twenty minutes long—no more. The broadcast was planned in three acts: (1) arrival of a hero; (2) speech; (3) departure of the hero. The middle part, the speech, was easy and could be left to speech writers. The other parts required experts, who would begin with study of the hall, and decisions on the use and placement of cameras. The drama was conceived in shots: Ike coming through the door at *back* of auditorium; Ike greeting crowd; people in gallery going wild, craning necks; Ike, escorted, making his way down the aisle; Mamie Eisenhower in box; Ike mounting platform; crowd going wild; Ike at rostrum, waving; Ike looking over toward Mamie; Mamie in box, smiling; on cue, Ike holding up arms as if to stop applause; crowd going wild. The final portion, the departure, was as carefully planned.

But BBD&O did not rely solely on pageantry. The kind of spot barrage proposed to Dewey in 1948, and rejected, was carried out for Eisenhower in 1952. The spots were all written by a volunteer from the Ted Bates advertising agency—Rosser Reeves. The basic formula called for a question and an answer in twenty seconds. All spots had the same four-word introduction.

ANNOUNCER: Eisenhower answers the nation!
CITIZEN: What about the cost of living, General?
IKE: My wife, Mamie, worries about the same thing. I tell her it's our job to change that on November fourth!

The "citizens" were shot in various locales. Eisenhower filmed the answers for all fifty spots in one day in a mid-Manhattan film studio specializing in television commercials. Reading from huge prompt cards, he occasionally expressed amazement "that an old soldier should come to this," but he went along with his experts. The answers were subsequently spliced to the questions. The spots were scheduled for a saturation coverage during the last two weeks of the campaign at an expense of $1,500,000.

Stevenson and his close advisers—Senators J. William Fulbright of Arkansas and Russell B. Long of Louisiana, and others—heard about the spot plan, but felt that Stevenson should *not* emulate it. The candidate himself said he had no wish to be merchandised "like a breakfast food." The decision probably did not affect the outcome, for Eisenhower was the more merchandisable product.

A climactic feature of the campaign was the Nixon "Checkers" speech, so named after the family dog. There had been rumors about Nixon's finances—they related to a fund put together by California supporters after his election to Congress. At one point Thomas Dewey, polling various Republican leaders, found a majority of the opinion that Nixon should withdraw from the race because of the charges, but the Republican National Committee decided to invest in a half-hour period on a sixty-four-station television hookup—plus several hundred radio stations—for a reply by Nixon. Several advertisers offered to sponsor the broadcast, but it was con-

sidered unwise to accept. Nixon went into seclusion to work on his broadcast.

Eisenhower, who emphasized that the Republican crusade needed a candidate "as clean as a hound's tooth," arranged to watch the program on a television set in the manager's office of the Cleveland auditorium, where an Eisenhower speech was scheduled. Nixon spoke from a Los Angeles studio.

On television the program opened with a close-up of Nixon's calling card, then went to Nixon sitting at a desk. Mrs. Nixon—"Pat"—sat to one side, watching him. Occasionally during the program he turned to her; at these moments the camera would move to her. Nixon spoke about the fund:

> Not one cent of the $18,000 or any other money of that type ever went to me for my personal use. Every penny of it was used to pay for political expenses that I did not think should be charged to the taxpayers of the United States. . . .

Nixon did not explain what was meant by "other money of that type" or how much there was of it. But he added a "confession." It was inspired by a recollection of how successfully President Franklin D. Roosevelt had once used a dog story. Nixon said:

> One other thing I should probably tell you, because if I don't they'll probably be saying this about me too, we did get something—a gift—after the election. A man down in Texas heard Pat on the radio mention the fact that our two daughters would like to have a dog. And, believe it or not, the day before we left on this campaign trip we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore saying they had a package for us. We went down to get it. You know what it was? It was a little cocker spaniel dog in a crate that he sent all the way from Texas. Black and white spotted. And our little girl—Tricia, the six-year-old—named it Checkers. And you know the kids love that dog and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we're going to keep it!

In conclusion he asked listeners to wire or write the Republican National Committee to help them decide whether he should stay on the ticket or "get off." He would leave it up to the committee. But whatever the outcome, he promised to campaign for the Republican ticket "up and down America until we drive the crooks and communists and those that defend them out of Washington. And remember, folks, Eisenhower is a great man, believe me. He is a great man. . . ."

Even before the deluge of supporting telephone calls and telegrams and letters began, it seemed clear that Nixon had survived his crisis. At the Cleveland auditorium office the group around Eisenhower had watched "seemingly without drawing breath." Mrs. Eisenhower and several of the men were seen to dab at their eyes with handkerchiefs. Immediately after the broadcast Eisenhower turned to Republican chairman Arthur Summerfield: "Well, Arthur, you surely got your $75,000 worth."

The 1952 campaign came after twenty years of Democratic party rule. They had involved world struggles, and a great expansion of American power. To Stevenson they had also been a time of humanitarian achievement. To another figure in the campaign, U.S. Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin, they had been "twenty years of treason." He blamed the Democrats for the "loss" of China. He continued to make charges about "communists and traitors" in high places—the State Department, its Voice of America, the Federal Communications Commission, the broadcasting field, and elsewhere. He made himself so effectively the spokesman of this theme that the whole blacklist mania had become "McCarthyism."

To some extent Nixon, promising to "drive the crooks and communists and those that defend them out of Washington," allied himself with McCarthyism. Eisenhower avoided doing so. He was said to despise McCarthy and his methods. Reports of this sort reassured many people; it was assumed that Eisenhower would, in due time, dissociate himself from McCarthyism.

Meanwhile the most resounding move of the Eisenhower campaign was his promise, if elected, to "go to Korea." The expectation that he would end the Korean conflict electrified the country.

To broadcasters it meant that the television boom, long confined to 108 scattered stations, would at last become nationwide.

As though in anticipation, restrictions on war materials were being lifted. Licensing was resumed. During the closing months of 1952 a number of new stations received a go-ahead. Among the first was KTBC-TV, Austin, Texas, licensed to Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, wife of the U.S. Senator from Texas; before it even reached the air, advertising sales were such that *Broadcasting* magazine reported: "AUSTIN'S BRINGING IN A GUSHER." Hundreds of additional applicants clamored for a go-ahead.

In November the vote ran: Eisenhower, 33,936,252; Stevenson, 27,314,992. The electoral vote was 442-89.

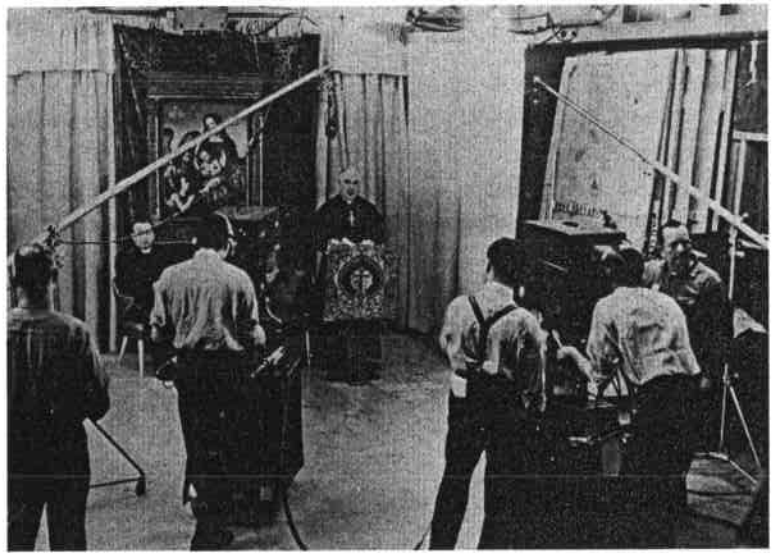
In December Eisenhower flew to Korea and back; the machinery for peace was in motion.

Now was a final chance to wheel and deal, to maneuver for position. Among the maneuverers were educators.

SIXTH REPORT AND ORDER

During the Truman years the Federal Communications Commission had acquired a woman commissioner. In 1948, a time when Truman could obtain from Congress almost nothing he requested, he played sly politics by nominating Frieda B. Hennock: he invited Senators to go on record as antifeminist or anti-Semitic. They risked neither and quickly confirmed her.

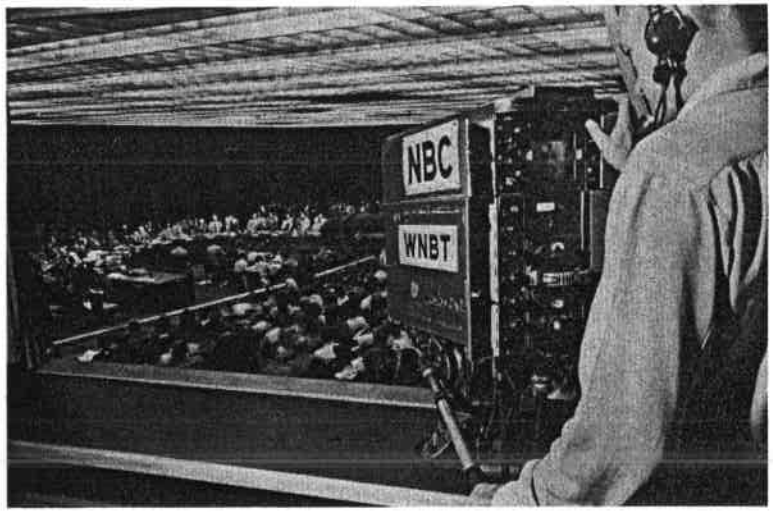
Commissioner Hennock soon launched a crusade to allocate a group of television channels to nonprofit, educational use. The licensing pause provided by the freeze was a chance to push this idea. In 1950 a Joint Committee (later renamed "Council") on Educational Television was formed; the attorney Telford Taylor became its counsel. Commissioner Hennock, with wide-ranging speeches and conferences, made herself its champion. Among the other commissioners, Commissioner Paul C. Walker showed some early interest. The others seemed lukewarm or cool.



1949: Francis Cardinal Spellman makes Christmas appearance on Dumont television. National Archives

NON-PROFIT WORLD

NBC-TV covers United Nations session. NBC



Industry spokesmen scoffed at the campaign. *Broadcasting*, which generally reflected the industry establishment, considered the idea "illogical, if not illegal." Most veteran broadcasters thought such ideas had been scotched with the defeat of the Wagner-Hatfield amendment of 1934. Some FM channels had been set aside by the FCC for education, but that seemed of little significance. Television channels were something else.

A device that helped educators dramatize their cause was a series of "monitoring studies," for which Ford Foundation funds were made available. In several cities, starting in January 1951, groups of viewers tabulated information about commercial television offerings. The finding that New York viewers could in one week witness 2,970 "acts or threats" of violence had an impact on many people.

With commercial television straining for a go-ahead, the campaign spearheaded by Commissioner Hennock began to have nuisance value. The FCC, encouraged by staff members, began to feel it had nothing to lose and much to gain from the reserved-channel idea. If educators failed to use the channels—as many industry leaders predicted—the FCC would at least have offered the chance. If educators seized the opportunity, the FCC would have led the way.

The 1952 Sixth Report and Order of the Federal Communications Commission was an omnibus package with items to please various groups. Channels 2 to 13 in the already established VHF (very high frequency) band were to be supplemented by seventy new channels in the UHF (ultra high frequency) band. Expansion for commercial television seemed to be assured. Meanwhile, both in VHF and UHF, a number of channels were reserved for education. Provision was made for a total of 242 educational stations; the number was later increased.

The educational channel reservations, snatching victory from old defeats, were occasion for oratory. Some hopefully predicted that the mounting problems of education—including teacher shortages and pockets of the disadvantaged—would be solved by this miraculous new resource. It was widely compared to the land grants that helped to create "land-grant colleges" after the Civil War.

There were also less sanguine views. It was pointed out that the new blueprint, unlike the long-ago Wagner-Hatfield proposal, involved no plan for financing the use of the channels. It was pointed out that boards of education faced desperate financial problems. Would educational television be one more demand on them, diverting funds from needed schoolrooms, equipment, salary increases? It seemed to some that educators had won special channels in which to go about with a tin cup in search of funds. But others said, one problem at a time. The channels first, financial problems later. Let the channels be saved. If not saved now, they would be gone forever.

So education, too, had a stake in the coming explosion.

HIGH LEVEL

Edwin Armstrong felt outmaneuvered. FM had been set back by its transfer to higher frequencies. It had received another blow when the FCC approved duplication of programming on AM-FM combination stations. The incentive to purchase FM sets had been lessened.

He had another problem. Although RCA was using FM in its TV as well as FM sets—as decreed by the FCC—RCA was not paying a cent of royalty. FM royalties were being paid to Armstrong by General Electric, Stromberg-Carlson, Westinghouse, Zenith, and others. RCA had paid nothing. A few lesser companies were following its example.

RCA had at times offered to negotiate a settlement—a million dollars had been mentioned. But this raised a question of fairness to those who had always paid royalties based on sales. Zenith had paid more than a million.

In 1948 Armstrong made his decision. He brought suit against

the mammoth RCA. He had spent most of his royalty earnings on the battle for FM. This added to his determination to press the lawsuit.

RCA as defendant had the right to examine Armstrong in pretrial hearings. These began in February 1949 in the lower Manhattan law offices of Cravath, Swaine & Moore. RCA attorneys began questioning the inventor. They kept it going for a full year.

Q. You are the plaintiff in the present action?
A. Yes.
Q. What is your occupation?
A. I am an electrical engineer.
Q. Do you have any other occupation?
A. I am a professor of electrical engineering at Columbia University.
Q. Do you have any other occupation?
A. I occasionally make inventions.

Armstrong, normally patient, became a man possessed. All his energies came to be centered on the suit. Three o'clock in the morning would find him poring over transcripts. At all hours he called attorneys to discuss tactics.

The RCA position gradually emerged. RCA, Sarnoff said, had done more than anyone to develop FM. Early discussions with Armstrong were even cited in support of this. The claim stirred Armstrong to fury.

His expenses mounted. His wife and friends pleaded with him to accept a settlement. But now victory had become a terrible need. The meaning of his life was at stake. In 1953 he fell ill; it was thought he had had a stroke. A broken man, at odds with family and friends, he finally authorized a settlement.

He had always had an obsession about high places. As a boy he had frightened Yonkers neighbors, swaying in the wind on a huge antenna pole. Later he had climbed around his fantastic Alpine FM tower to supervise every detail of construction.

One day, neatly dressed, he stepped out of a window of his thirteenth-floor East Side apartment. He was found on a third-floor extension. Shortly afterwards RCA made a million-dollar settlement with the estate.*

MAELSTROM

As 1952 drew to a close, the world of broadcasting was a maelstrom of probes, experiments, deals, adjustments. Everything was in flux. All was expectancy.

Radio, sensing disaster, looked for new functions. Some stations became "Negro stations"; most of these were owned by whites but aimed at a Negro "market" with various kinds of "Negro" music. Some people thought radio should become the medium of intellectuals. One-time radio greats like Eddie Cantor and Paul Whiteman were disk-jockeys. Taboos had vanished; now almost anything could be discussed on radio. But ratings still plunged, and major sponsors were ready and eager for the switch. As the comedian Fred Allen put it, they were ready to abandon radio like the bones at a barbecue.

Droves were pushing into television. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen was pitted in a weekly series against Milton Berle and his Texaco program. (Berle quipped: "We both work for the same boss, Sky Chief.") Violent roller-skating derbies were winning a vogue. The wrestler Gorgeous George, with marcelled hair, made periodic appearances. *Information Please*, transplanted from radio, provided an erudite touch. Another radio veteran, Walter Winchell, wearing his hat like a 1930's movie reporter, shouted out scoops with gravelly voice. Edward R. Murrow and a young collaborator, Fred W. Friendly, had transformed their documentary radio series *Hear It Now* into *See It Now*. Jackie Gleason had become a bus driver in *The Honeymooners*. Dr. Frances Horwich talked to pre-school

* Litigation with other companies continued for thirteen years. All suits were won by the Armstrong estate.

NEGRO DJ'S EARN MORE MONEY

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION WITH A LONG RECORD OF HIGH PAY AND FAIR TREATMENT TO ITS NATIONALLY FAMOUS NEGRO DISC JOCKEYS. WE ARE EXPANDING OUR ORGANIZATION AND REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Negro frantic type, blues and jive.
2. Negro spiritual and gospel smooth type.
3. Negro blues singer, guitar player, showman.
4. Negro woman for spiritual gospel and homemaker show. Good personality.

IF YOU ARE THE RIGHT PERSON YOU WILL BE HEAVILY PROMOTED ON A NATIONAL LEVEL. GOOD BASE PAY, TALENT, COMMISSIONS, AND YEARLY BONUS. WRITE FULL DETAILS, EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SEND DISC AND PHOTO.

APPLY BOX 107C, B•T

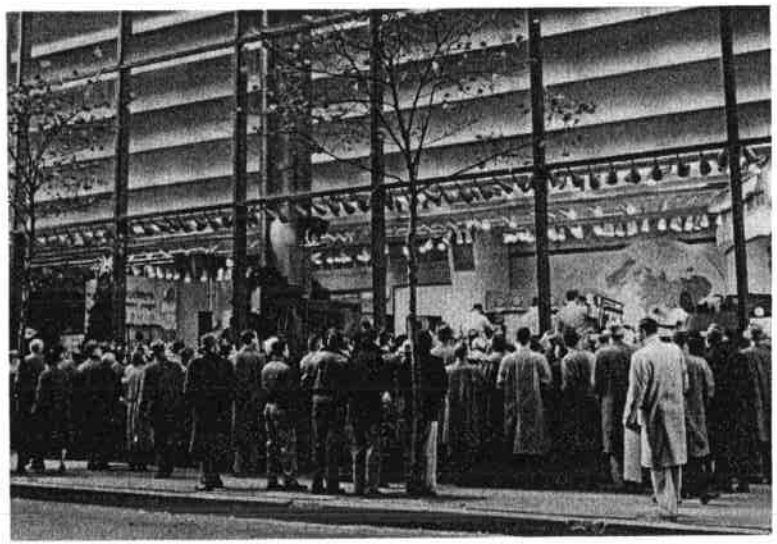
A radio station announces its needs—January 1954. *Broadcasting*

children on *Ding Dong Schoolhouse*. Arthur Murray and his wife taught dancing. World War II battle footage was impressively assembled into the film series *Victory At Sea*, with music by Richard Rodgers. Children sat spellbound by ancient cartoons and westerns. Politicians came when they could: televised crime hearings had made a national figure out of U.S. Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee. The *Today* series began, partly newscast and partly variety show; its purpose at first baffled reviewers, and it won neither audience nor sponsor until the arrival of J. Fred Muggs, a baby chimpanzee owned by two former NBC pages. A *Today* staff member saw him waiting for an elevator while sucking formula from a plas-

David Garroway, J. Fred Muggs, and friend, on *Today*. NBC

TODAY

Crowd on 48th Street, New York, watches *Today* telecast—and occasionally sees itself on the monitors. NBC



tic bottle. Everybody said television should be visual, and Muggs seemed to be that; he was not verbal. Producer Gerald Green has described what happened after Muggs became a *Today* regular.

> Women proposed to him; advertisers fought for the right to use his photo in their supermarket flyers; Chambers of Commerce sought his good offices; actresses posed with him; officers of newly commissioned naval vessels demanded that he christen them.

In Florida he got a room in a restricted hotel. He appeared as guest of honor in Central Park in New York at an I Am an American Day rally, although really a native of Cameroon.

But the television crown was firmly on the head of Lucille Ball of *I Love Lucy*. She was pregnant. Throughout the final months of 1952 this provided the comedy plotting as the nation watched Lucille—or Lucy—grow larger. A program about the big day was filmed when the event became imminent. Then on January 19, 1953, Desiderio Alberto Arnaz IV, 8½ pounds, was born on the exact day of the Lucy-has-her-baby telecast. The event found 68.8 per cent of television sets tuned to *I Love Lucy** and was headline news even in competition with the Eisenhower inaugural, which came the following morning. The two events symbolized the moment. Amid the delirium, telecasters awaited the greatest of all booms.

* According to Trendex, a rating system based on telephone calls.

PRIME 4

"In prosperity there is never any dearth of friends."
EURIPIDES