

PAT COSTA
As I
See It



If anyone wonders what kind of show is the favorite of television executives who make the selections for the rest of us, the answer must certainly be that half-hour format known as a situation comedy.

For two weeks it seems as if I've been watching nothing but sit-com. Unfortunately, none of the new ones with the exception of "Doctor in the House," the British entry which I wrote about last week is worth much attention.

True, these opinions are based on one or two viewings of the shows in question. Still, it is traditional to put one's best foot forward at the outset particularly for comedy shows.

One of the most disappointing was NBC's "The Good Life" which stars Larry Hagman and Donna Mills as a middle class couple who get tired of paying the rent and decide to take jobs as servants with the very wealthy David Wayne and his sister Hermione Baddeley.

Originally a novel by Douglas Wallop published in 1968, "The Good Life" was a charmer with the erstwhile servant and master engaged in a constant battle over who was superior. The servant bested the master by saving enough money to buy the mansion from him but finds himself the ultimate loser as once again he must face mortgage payments and the rest of the crude middle class life.

The TV series retains the

title and the original premise but any parallel with the book from there in is strictly coincidental.

"The Jimmy Stewart Show" has Jimmy Stewart going for it just as "Shirley" has Shirley MacLaine. In the former instance it may be enough to carry the show. In the latter it is doubtful.

Stewart is an absent-minded professor with a wife who appears to be 30 years younger than he, has two sons born more than 20 years apart, a grandson and a friendly colleague, John MacGiver.

With the exception of MacGiver who is a frequent visitor, they all live together in one house along with the older son's wife. Unfortunately the script which is weak in plot is also weak in dialogue forcing the entire cast to cute speeches. Stewart and MacGiver are sometimes able to turn the cuteness into something better. Unfortunately the rest are not.

Shirley MacLaine, as a roving photographer, was involved, when I saw her, helping a Scotsman convince the reverends that his homemade whiskey had medicinal qualities.

Again a weak script works against this Hollywood name who fails to dominate a screen with the force of a John Wayne or a Jimmy Stewart or a Henry Fonda. Thus, lack of something happening is more worrisome to her than to others.

At Home with the Movies

BUTTERFIELD 8 (1960)
Thursday, Oct. 7 (CBS)

In a loose adaptation of a John O'Hara novel, Elizabeth Taylor plays the mistress of a well-bred businessman (Laurence Harvey) who is unhappily married to the boss's daughter.

The national Catholic film office rated this film B, morally objectionable in part for all, because of suggestive costuming, dialogue and situations.

FACE OF FEAR
Friday, Oct. 8 (CBS)

A made-for-TV film, this one stars Elizabeth Ashley as a woman who thinks she has a fatal disease and contracts with a killer for her own murder. Darned if she doesn't discover the illness isn't fatal after all, just as the gunman is on his way to do her in. Ricardo Montalban is co-star. There are no NCOMP ratings for made-for-TV films.

IMPATIENT HEART
Friday, Oct. 8 (NBC)

Carrie Snodgrass (of Diary of a Mad Housewife) stars in this made-for-TV film about a kookie social worker who drives all her friends up the wall by treating every personal relationship as a case. Michael Constantine co-stars. No NCOMP rating.

RETURN OF THE SEVEN (1966)
Saturday, Oct. 9 (NBC)

A remake of a remake, this is a sequel to The Magnificent Seven (1960), which was a Western version of the 1954 Japanese classic by Akira Kurosawa, The Seven Samurai. NCOMP rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

FIVE CARD STUD (1968)
Sunday, Oct. 10 (ABC)

Dean Martin and Robert Mitchum star in a fast-action Western — Martin as a professional gambler, Mitchum as a

fire-and-brimstone preacher. NCOMP rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

THE SAND PEBBLES (1966)
Sunday, Oct. 10 (CBS)

An interesting, though slow-moving, historical drama about how the U.S. Navy gets unintentionally involved in political turmoil on the Yantze River in 1926 China.

NCOMP rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF (1958)

A well-made but heavily laundered film version of Tennessee Williams' play about the dying patriarch of a Southern family (Burl Ives, in a superb portrayal) and which of his sons is to inherit his money.

Explosive adult dialogue, even with a lot of editing for TV.

NCOMP rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

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Once Over Briefly

Ratings from the Catholic Office for Motion Pictures on the moral suitability of current movies:—

ANDERSON TAPES—Adults only—A coarse comic melodrama about a robbery of a New York apartment; unnecessary sex and violence.

BILLY JACK—Objectionable for everyone—Conflict between runaway teenagers and people of an Arizona town. Sadistic violence and nudity, obscene dialogue.

BEGUILLED—Adults, with reservations—Lust and violence in Civil War setting; called a comedy, if you consider nymphomania and murder funny.

BIG JAKE—Adults only—Routine but very bloody Western in which a mean and tough John Wayne invades a bandit lair to rescue his kidnapped grandson.

BUNNY O'HARE—Adults—Bette Davis and Ernest Borgnine, disguised as hippies, rob banks, and their antics supply a framework for a series of heavy-handed comments on current social issues.

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE—Objectionable for everyone—A satiric reduction of human characters to sex-obsessed caricatures; crude language, explicit visuals.

CAT O' NINE TAILS—Objectionable for everyone—Gruesome murders in a story about a behavioral-research lab.

CLAY PIGEON—Objectionable—Low budget flick about a Viet Vet who tries to break a narcotics ring in Los Angeles.

CONFORMIST—Adults—with reservations—The development of fascism, with Jean-Louis Trintignant as a man so driven to conform that he would become an assassin.

DARLING LILI—Adults only—Julie Andrews is a spy against the British in World War I. Songs and comedy and fabulous wardrobe but frothy plot. Not innocent enough for kiddies.

DEATH IN VENICE—Adults—A visually lush interpretation of Thomas Mann's turn-of-the-century story dealing with the torment of an aging artist over a beautiful adolescent boy.

DRIVE, HE SAID—Condemned.

THE DEVILS—Condemned—Warmed over 18th Century muckraking about a convent and its priest engaged in devil worship.

DOG—for adults only—Marshall Wyatt Erp gets involved in a gunfight at O.K. corral. The old-time Western excitement is marred by making the plot a moralizing allegory about the Vietnam War.

FRIENDS—Objectionable—Daft idyll about a teen age couple having a baby without either doctor or midwife.

HELLSTROM CHRONICLE—Adults and adolescents—Science-fiction film with various insects starring; the terrible potentialities of insect power.

IN COLD BLOOD—Adults—Retelling of true story of farm-family murders and how the killer was caught.

JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN—Adults, with reservations—Daiton Trumbo's film, based on his own 1938 novel about a World War I "basket case."

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA—Adults and adolescents—Return of David Lean classic of exciting desert warfare. Drastic cutting of original version makes plot somewhat disjointed. Great acting and photography.

LE MANS—For family—Cars and drivers provide the excitement at the 24-hour road race in France. Great sport scenes as Steve McQueen drives his own car.

LET'S SCARE JESSICA TO DEATH—Adults—a ghoulish psychological thriller with a more than light touch of vampirism thrown in for good measure.

THE LION IN WINTER—Adults—Magnificent prize-winning comedy about the tumultuous love of Henry VI for Eleanor of Aquitaine.

LITTLE BIG MAN—Adults—Dustin Hoffman in autobiography of white boy raised by Indians, who becomes sole survivor of Custer's massacre. Mentary on human relationships and the bruises ("murders") which hit us everyday.

MURPHY'S WAR—For adults—Good exciting tale: Peter O'Toole is sole survivor of British merchant ship sunk by Nazi U-boat. His private vengeance on that sub and its crew is a war in itself.

OMEGA MAN—For adults—A futuristic look at how the last humans on earth may survive.

PANIC IN NEEDLE PARK—Adults—A superficial approach to the drug-addiction problem, with good performances by Al Pacino and Kitty Winn.

SUMMER OF '42—Adults, with reservations—How a teenage boy in '42 discovers life and sex from an "older woman".

THE TODD KILLINGS—Objectionable—based on the true story of the Pied Piper of Tuscon. A lurid sex-murder melodrama.

WHO IS HARRY KELLERMAN—Adults only—Dustin Hoffman is a successful composer-singer, who has crushed people on his way to the top. As his world crumbles he slips into phantasies of bitter paranoia. Sad, not funny.