

PAT COSTA
As I
See It



If there is anything the television situation comedy proves, it is that without a decent writer or set of writers the most competent acting talent can become mired in the morass.

In continuing our look at the new half-hour sit-coms appearing this fall on television, this fact is demonstrated again. We saw two of the new ones the second week around.

"Bridget Loves Bernie" and "The Bob Newhart show" are seen before and after the CBS gem. "The Mary Tyler Moore Show".

The first which is about the marriage of a Jewish boy and a Catholic girl features David Birney and Meredith Baxter. Theirs are fresh faces and had the particular episode stayed with them even the hackneyed plot about religious raffle tickets might have been saved.

In the hands of their relatives played by Audrey Lindley, Bibi Osterward, David Doyle and Harold J. Stone it was the kind of 30 minutes you run away from. To call their portrayals of Catholic and Jewish parents caricatures would be too kind.

There was no attempt at any of the real situations from which actual humor can spring.

"The Bob Newhart Show" with Bob as a psychologist and Suzanne Pleshette as his substitute teacher wife also was a disappointment.

In this second episode, Suzanne was holding a career day at school and had invited her hus-

band to join a group of professionals only when one of her first choices backed out.

When Newhart bombs out on the first visit he gets Suzanne to invite him back again to speak to the third graders.

The humor is what we've come to expect as typical Newhart — dry, low-key. But, rather than building, the laughs came as one-liners with very little character development. Since some of the people responsible for Mary Tyler Moore's success had their hands in this one we were anticipating something better.

"Wait Until Your Father Gets Home" is another CBS entry seen Friday nights. It's a 30-minute cartoon dealing with the generation gap. The voices of Tom Bosley and Joan Gerber are heard as the establishment parents and the out-of-sight youngsters are Kristina Holland, David Hayward and Jackie Hayley.

Our 5-and-7-year-olds thought a cartoon in prime time was fine. The subject matter about the teenage daughter wearing a bra-less, see-through dress in the first show did not seem like material fit for a young, weekend audience in the 7:30 time slot. The second show dealt with a hippie friend who goes square when a lucrative job comes up.

Somewhere there must be a stable of writers with some original ideas. Hopefully, those producing shows such as the above will see the need for them.

Once Over Briefly

101 DALMATIANS — Everyone — Disney again. Animated fun for the kiddies.

PATTON — Adults and adolescents — President Nixon's favorite movie.

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM — Adults — The latest, and best, film from the nationally renowned philosopher who once said, "I don't believe in an afterlife, but I'm bringing a change of underwear." Guess who.

PORTNOY'S COMPLAINT — Condemned — Richard Benjamin plays the Jewish kid with all the hang-ups. Again. Poor Richard.

SHAFT'S BIG SCORE — Objectionable — Believe it or not, the Catholic film office said of this movie, "Shaft has been given the treatment his name suggests, and so have we."

SLYJACKED — Adults — An airplane bomber makes for one of the most tedious movies of the year.

SNOOPY, COME HOME — Everyone — The dog that can do everything but talk is back: give it a K for kids.

STRAW DOGS — Condemned — Sam Peckinpah's rages of sustained, intense violence are all the rage.

TEN DAYS WONDER — Adults — Another of Claude Chabrol's thrillers.

THE CANDIDATE — Adults — Would you trust your country to the Sundance Kid?

THE DOBERMAN GANG — Unrated — Heist flick. The action's mostly for the dogs.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION — Adults — I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I did, till we loved?

THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS — Adults — Masterpiece of film about the Italian Jews under fascism.

THE GODFATHER — Adults — A splendid version of Mario Puzo's novel of the same title.

THE GRADUATE — Adults with reservations — Our boy who got out of plastics is back in circulation. Koo-Koo-Ca-Choo, Mrs. Robinson.

At Home With the Movies

ROLLING MAN
Wednesday, Oct. 4 (ABC)

A violent melodramatic tale about a poor chap (Dennis Weaver) who runs a bit amuck after the death of his wife and the disappearance of his children.

The Catholic film office does not supply ratings for the made-for-TV movies.

THE UNDEFEATED (1969)
Thursday, Oct. 5 (CBS)

Good old-fashioned Western starring John Wayne (who else) and Rock Hudson. Wayne and Hudson are, respectively, ex-Union and ex-Confederate officers leading bands toward Mexico for a new start. They meet, clash a bit, and gradually develop a deep respect for each other, all the while taking adventure and adversity by the horns.

"Undeclared" is rated A-I, for everyone.

TO SIR, WITH LOVE (1967)
Friday, Oct. 6 (CBS)

When they start having Sidney Poitier film festivals in the 1990's, this movie will undoubtedly be among the most popular. In a kind of a twist on the motif of white teacher having to cope with his black students, Poitier is the black teacher trying to handle the kids in a London slum school.

The Catholic film office called Poitier's performance "extraordinary," and rated the film A-II, for adults and adolescents.

MAROONED (1969)
Saturday, Oct. 7 (NBC)

Gregory Peck, Gene Hackman, Richard Grenna, and James Franciscus star in a star-trek adventure that goes awry as three astronauts get stranded in space. Peck plays the ground control director, and David Janssen flies in a rescue capacity. In all, the film offers super space and electronic effects, and a taut, gripping adventure yarn for all ages.

It's rated A-II, for adults and adolescents.

HEC RAMSEY
Sunday, Oct. 8 (NBC)

Richard Boone has the title role in this premier of NBC's Mystery Movie series. He plays a midwestern sheriff trying out some new-fangled scientific ideas about law enforcement. His hope is that the test tube and microscope will be more useful

than the quick draw, but, of course, his reputation as the fastest gun in Kansas is something he'll just have to contend with during the coming TV season.

EL DORADO (1967)
Sunday, Oct. 8 (ABC)

John Wayne and Robert Mitchum team up to try and stop a rancher from forcing his neighbors off the land. But here's the catch, Mitchum, the sheriff, is an incurable alcoholic, and Wayne, his partner, is a semi-paralytic.

Producer and director Howard Hawks has concocted a good mixture of action, farcical situations and unconventional treatment to make this Western worth it. Rated A-III, for adults.

FIRECREEK (1968)
Monday, Oct. 9 (NBC)

Henry Fonda and Jimmy Stewart star in a Western that has

a message, if only one could figure out what it is. The movie is reminiscent of the showdown situation immortalized in "High Noon," but it lacks the punch.

The elusive message? The film is saying that (a) fighting and shootouts are good, or (b) fighting and shootouts are bad. Take your pick.

It's rated A-II, for adults and adolescents.

NIGHT OF TERROR
Tuesday, Oct. 10 (ABC)

TV-made fare about a pretty, young thing (Donna Mills) who has the misfortune to witness a murder and is then forced to flee the mob — but whom can she trust? Haven't we seen this one before? It stars Martin Balsam, Chuck Connors, and Eddie Egan, the ex-cop around whose adventures "The French Connection" was modeled.



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