



## TV AND RADIO

### Special Effects

EVER since observers first realized that television and films have special effects on human behavior, experts have debated whether violence witnessed on the screen can stimulate viewers to aggression in real life. Probably a majority of psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, and juvenile authorities have held that a causal relationship does exist. But some specialists have dissented. Both sides generally agree, however, that mentally troubled persons, unstable individuals already filled with hostilities, can be "triggered" by exposure to on-screen violence into criminal outbursts. Cases supporting this idea can be found in records on the subject. For example, a young man who committed a murder in New York told policemen that he had been watching TV when suddenly he was impelled to commit a brutal assault on a woman. A network representative, on the other hand, offered counterbalancing testimony at a 1961 Senate hearing on "Effects on Young People of Crime and Violence Portrayed on Television":

"There is not even satisfactory proof that the emotionally disturbed child is harmed by television. Rather, it would appear that it is often the case with a disturbed child that that which he sees on television may help him drain off, vicariously, elements in his behavioral pattern which cause that disturbance."

In recent years the "catharsis" theory, which holds that observed aggression tends to release pent-up or aroused anger therapeutically, has been severely shaken by a number of psychologists in controlled experiments. Television at the same time has continued to produce filmed violence in vast quantities. A leading Hollywood producer told me this year how a top-level policymaker at a network received his proposal for a new romantic series. He said he would buy the series if every other program showed violence and someone getting "kicked in the groin," as well as other similar effects.

Recently, a causal relationship was said to exist between televised violence and the behavior of "normal" people.

Dr. Ralph S. Banay, a prominent psychiatrist and president of the Medical Correction Association, referred at a New York symposium to "a confusion of fantasy with reality, fed by an endless stream of television violence."

"We underestimate the damage that these accumulated images do to the brain," said Dr. Banay. "The immediate effect can be delusional, equivalent to a sort of post-hypnotic suggestion." He partly blamed this special effect for the shocking murder in March of a woman in New York. Thirty-seven persons heard the victim's screams on a well-lighted sidewalk in front of an apartment building in the early hours of the morning. But not one of them responded to her calls for help.

Dr. Karl Menninger, director of the Menninger Foundation, also spoke at the symposium. "Public apathy to crime," he said, "is itself a manifestation of aggression." A point made by New York psychiatrists is that "persons with mature and well-integrated personalities would not have acted in this way." Here we are no longer confronted by the isolated, abnormal deviant, but by a representative group of thirty-seven apparently "normal" citizens. The complexity of such special effects are difficult to understand; and television cannot, of course, bear the exclusive burden of a violent age. Yet we seem to be witnessing a slow, cumulative crescendo of individual and group aggression, passive and overt. Many respected psychiatrists hold that television violence is significantly involved.

The important link between Hollywood and television where violence is concerned was dramatized recently at the nationwide televising of the annual awards of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Among the nominees in the "Special Effects" category were *The Birds* and *Cleopatra*. From Alfred Hitchcock's film, an excerpt showed flocks of birds swooping to attack the heads and faces of terrified children. From *Cleopatra* was chosen the dagger assassination of Julius Caesar in the Roman Senate. A conspirator with a knife strode deliberately to Caesar's back and the camera caught the full impact of the blade's plunge. Other knives flashed swiftly and repeatedly. Splotches of blood appeared on Caesar. In this lengthy film spectacle, there must have been dozens of examples of the skill of the special effects creator warranting his Oscar. Out of all that footage, when millions of Americans in their homes were watching, why did the producers have to choose, unredeemed by context, such moments of gratuitous horror? What special effect will this "special effect" on television produce next? —ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON.

## Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

ABECEDARIANS AHOY!

Below is a group of words each of which contains the letters A, B, and C in sequence (but not necessarily together). Mrs. Thaddeus Seymour of Hanover, New Hampshire, who selected the words, presents definitions of them in Column Two. She asks you to fill in the blank spaces (some of which may represent other A's, B's, and C's). Answers on page 00.

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. A _ _ _ B _ _ _ _ C      | bacteria destroyer                              |
| 2. _ A _ B _ _ C            | fabric  |
| 3. A B _ _ _ C _ _ _        | surrender authority                             |
| 4. _ A _ B _ C _ _          | outdoor feast                                   |
| 5. _ _ A _ B _ _ C _        | barricade                                       |
| 6. _ A _ B _ _ _ C _        | soft radiance                                   |
| 7. A B _ C _ _              | beaded counter                                  |
| 8. A _ B _ _ _ _ _ _ C _    | simultaneous attraction and repulsion           |
| 9. _ A B C _ _ _ _          | little grebe                                    |
| 10. _ A B _ _ _ C _ _ _ _   | mealtime cover                                  |
| 11. _ A _ B _ _ _ C _ _     | red gem   |
| 12. _ A _ B _ _ C           | two-syllable metrical foot, the second accented |
| 13. _ _ _ A B _ _ _ C       | demoniacal                                      |
| 14. _ _ _ A _ B _ _ _ _ C _ | resplendence                                    |
| 15. A _ B _ _ _ _ C _       | environment                                     |
| 16. _ A B _ _ _ C _ _ _     | construct                                       |
| 17. A B _ _ _ _ _ C _       | summary   |
| 18. A _ B _ C _ _ _         | tunny   |
| 19. A _ _ _ _ B _ C         | distilling apparatus                            |
| 20. _ A B _ _ _ _ _ C _ _   | place of worship                                |



## BOOKED FOR TRAVEL

### Islands Under the Wind

**I**N THE first days of formal—well, *scheduled*—travel to the French Society Islands, the planes landed at Bora Bora and then passengers were ferried the last 155 miles to Tahiti in flying boats. Bora Bora, which Michener has called the most beautiful island in the world, had the only airstrip, left over from the days of the industrious Seabees. Although it was still rural—I'm talking now about 1958—it was nevertheless the center of traffic for the whole chain of islands—the Windwards of Tahiti and Moorea, the Tuamotus, Gambiers, Australs, and Marquesas.

When the airstrip, and in short order the jets, came to Tahiti, Bora Bora slipped back into the sleepy oblivion from which it had been roused only twice—once during World War II when the Americans built a huge base there, and once again when regular plane service was begun from Los Angeles and Honolulu by TAI, the French airline that now calls itself UTA.

The positions of Tahiti and Bora Bora have now been reversed, and Bora Bora, headquarters for the Islands Under the Wind, has now become the remote tropical paradise. In Tahiti the other morning I boarded the big Bermuda flying boat that is still operated here by RAI, an inter-island feeder line, and flew off to Bora Bora. The journey took an hour or so, stopping on the way in the lagoon at Huahine, which has no strip. Some Hawaiian friends with holdings in the French Society Islands had sent a long-haired belle down to the wharf to meet my launch, and she told me she was under instructions to convey me back to my friends' house on the rumble seat of a Vespa.

The house repopes, in what I suspect is great ease, at the edge of the lagoon, a few minutes from the village of Vaitape. It consists of one enormous room and a partition that separates the bedroom, bath, and kitchen. Bora Borans and Tahitians of all shapes and ages, many of them in *pareus*, that sweep of bright cloth that passes for a wrap, dress, or other lounging costume, were at work in the kitchen. A few lounged among the pillows, idly twicking away at guitars as if torpor were industry and they were being interviewed for character.

Eventually we were seated at a long table with the water visible out the

great square windows, and the kitchen staff appeared with *poisson cru*, a raw fish that had been caught in the lagoon that morning and marinated in lime juice; crunchy *maoa*, a crustacean that looks like a snail; and *foo yung ha*, which is sort of scrambled eggs with carrots, cabbage, abalone, shrimp, bamboo shoots, ham, and diced bacon. Having taken care of the Tahitian and Chinese community, there was left only the French. The kitchen culture of Gaul provided French bread that could pass muster in Dijon and an icy bottle of Pouilly that had been bottled for just such an occasion in far-off Burgundy in the bountiful year of '61. There was little left to do, afterwards, but to collapse on the back porch to watch the little ouma, as long as a finger, jump in schools across the lagoon. Somewhere down there a pompano or two was on the hunt, followed possibly by an ulua. Far out across the water, the flying boat waited at her mooring and behind her the mountains fairly leaped at the skyline with ragged thrusts.

Some semblance of this sort of dreamy life has been made available on Bora Bora by the addition of a hotel that many call the best in the South Seas. I have no particular reason to argue, and there are certainly many *soignée* touches that might prove unusual in the infinitely more sophisticated Caribbean. Each of its thatched bungalows is equipped with a pair of fins and masks, which are left beside the front door. Spray cans, some for the prevention of mosquito bites and others to use in counterattacks against bugs generally, are set out on the night table. A plastic parasol is at hand in case of rain.

These refinements were installed by a forty-three-year-old San Franciscan named Robert Fraser who first got interested in these parts in the course of a yacht race from San Pedro to Papeete in 1956. The crew was twenty-five days at sea with no sight of land, and Fraser was determined that anyone who had taken that much trouble to get to the South Pacific deserved a cushy establishment, once he arrived, in which to convalesce. There were few such places around in 1956, but Fraser was experienced as a builder and determined as a man. He spent one year acquiring the land alongside the beach at Bora Bora on which he eventually built his hotel. For one thing, every illegitimate off-

spring of anybody connected with a land title to the property had to be found. "You could publish the lease in *Reader's Digest* as an article," he says now. To satisfy all the claims, some leaseholders had to be brought from a neighboring island and given a certain type of wine. Some former leaseholders retained the right to stay at the hotel with their children for a specified number of days in addition to keeping the rights to all the coconuts. "If we cut a coconut tree down," says Fraser, "we have to pay what that coconut tree would have produced."

Water was found in three days, but the right of one faucet had to be awarded to the original titleholder of the land on which it was discovered. Rain proved another problem. It rained twenty-three days without stopping, and it was finally necessary to fly in raincoats and give them to the workers if the hotel was ever going to be built. The first guests arrived in June 1961, and the place has been gathering a reputation ever since. It now has twenty-two rooms in thatched bungalows, most of them strung out along the edge of a sandy beach washed by a huge lagoon.

The ultimate plans of the hotel, which was backed by Honolulu industrialist Chinn Ho and the Long Drugstore Company, a discount chain prominent in California and Hawaii, call for forty-eight rooms. "We will build four a year until it begins to look harmful



—H.S.

Bora Bora belle wearing pareu.