



# A National Video Registry

I've talked about doing this for more than five years. There's a National Film Registry. There's a National Recording Registry. There's no National Video Registry. Why not? Who knows. Film and Video are friendly, but far from the same thing. Television, and streaming and the like, is a home experience, while film tends to be a more public, shared experience. Are there exceptions, yes, but for the most part, that's the big difference other than physical form.

So, how did I do this? Lemme tell you.

First, I use the National Film Registry idea of selecting things that are "Historically, Culturally, or Aesthetically Significant." It's not just the most watched, or the winners of the biggest awards, but things that have a footprint. I use a simple-ish set of requirements -

- 1) A single event or program must have been produced at least ten years ago.
- 2) If the entry is a series, it must have ended a minimum of ten years ago, or have premiered no less than twenty years ago.
- 3) Television programs and series are eligible, as are Internet presentations, direct-to-video, closed-circuit, and other forms are eligible.
- 4) This isn't the end-all-be-all list. I'm starting with 25





# The Ed Sullivan Show

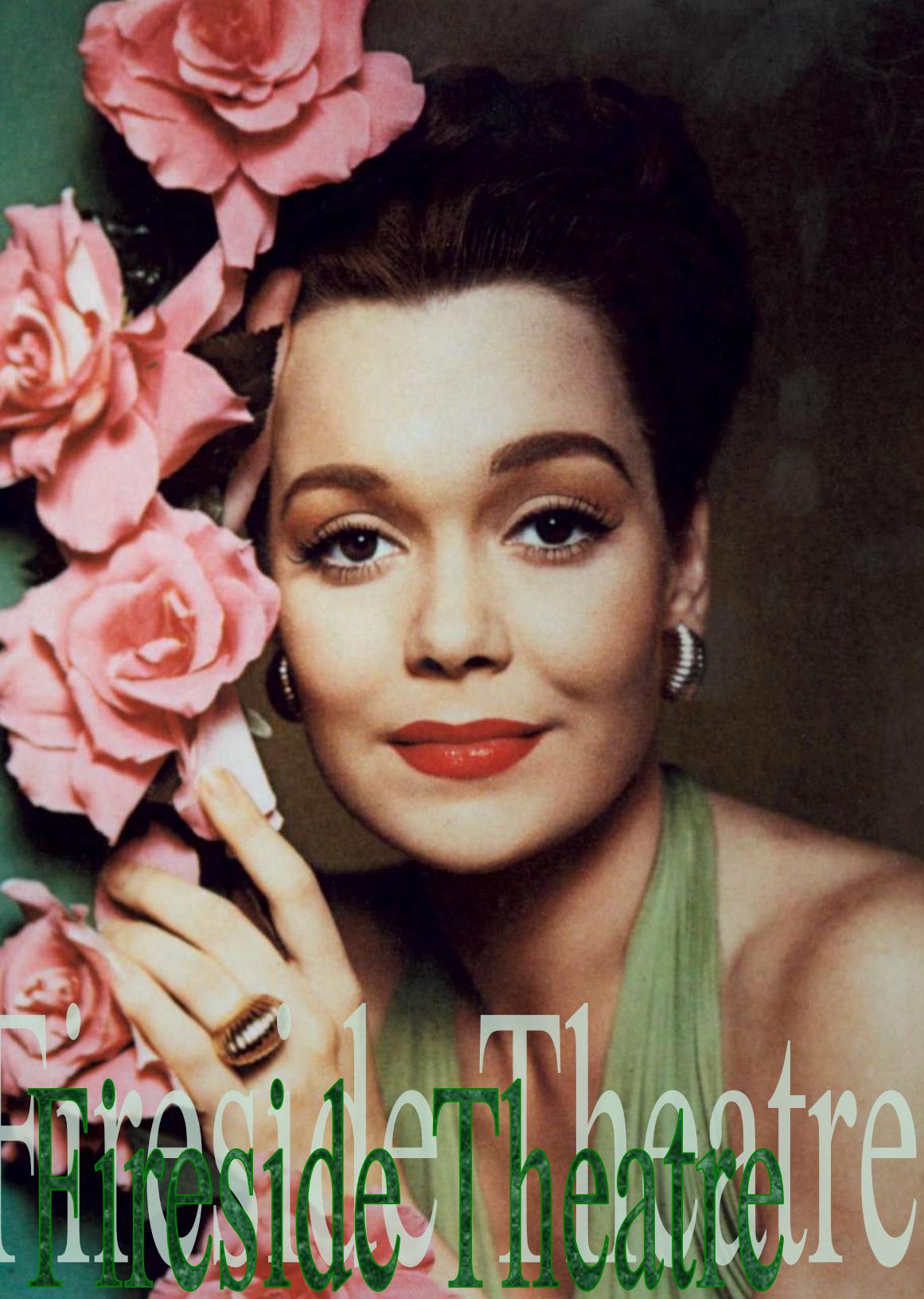
Ed Sullivan is one of the most important figures in the history of television. There is no question about that, and his place in the general history of American Popular Culture is also secure. His show was one of the most watched of its era, evolved pretty much it's entire run, and would be the first place so many acts were first encountered. That's huge.

Through today's lens, Sullivan was a highly unlikely superstar. Not a super-handsome guy, an more than a little awkward. One critic said he got to where he was no by having a great personality, but by having NO personality. Sounds legit. He was one of the most recognized people in America, the entire run of the show, from 1948 to 1971.

But, other than Sullivan, what is so important is that his guests broke huge. The Beatles. Elvis. Topo Gigio. The Doors. Many comedians. Many Broadway shows. It wasn't that they wouldn't have made it without Sullivan, but with Ed Sullivan, it got so much easier.

Originally, the show was called *Toast of The Town*, but everyone always called it *The Ed Sullivan Show*, which became its official title.

*The Ed Sullivan Show* has been incredibly well-preserved. There are some missing episodes from the early years, but there are Kinetoscopes of some of the early episodes, and a lot of tapes of the later ones. The Paley Center has some, UCLA, and I believe that CBS has nearly everything. It's an easy entry to the Registry.



# Fireside Theatre

You may never have heard of *Fireside Theatre*, which is a shame. It was never well-received during its time, but it was highly popular, Jane Wyman was the host (and for some of its run, it was called *Jane Wyman Presents*) and it was a winner of various awards. The version of *The Lottery* that was produced is classic, and one of the best things that came out of TV in 1953.

The real reason to honor *Fireside Theatre* with inclusion is the staff. Rod Serling, Blake Edwards, Ray Bradbury, Gene Roddenberry, Robert Florey, Cornell Woolrich, and on and on and on. The actors were great too. Fay Raye, Claud Atkins, Lee Marvin, Peter Lawford, and so many others. They did a version of *A Christmas Carol* which starred Ralph Richardson, and that was amazing.

The big thing about *Fireside Theatre* is that it made the recorded show a reality. Other shows were live when they first went on the air in 1949, but *Fireside Theatre* had been pre-shot, so they could tighten things down a lot better than live TV.

Some of the episodes were phenomenal, but really, it wasn't about the quality of the show. It was about the show itself. It was an anthology show in a time when the dominant idea was that people didn't want full-length shows.

Jane Wyman, the former Mrs. Ronald Reagan, was magnetic, and she's one of my favorite actresses of the 40s and 50s. She was a great hostess, though she only hosted for the last three seasons.

The Paley Center has a copy of *A Christmas Carol* and UCLA has several, including *The Canterville Ghost*

# TV GUIDE

A Week With  
**'LAUGH-IN'S  
DINGALINGS'**



Let us leave the 1950s for a bit and talk about *Laugh-in*.

It's still pretty funny. I mean, really funny at times, and a lot of the humor has faded a bit, but the timing on the show is insane, and you can see how it led to both *SNL* and *MTV* quite easily.

Modern comedy was forged in *Laugh-in*, and not just in the innuendo stylings, but within the way that everything was timed, laid-out, and presented. It was a show that was planned in a writers room with incredible precision and then delivered by some of the best in the business. It's incredible the cast Rowan and Martin put together, not only because they were really good at what they did, but because they could deliver the material without making it look like they were being subversive.

But they were!

My all-time favorite interview was with William F. Buckley, and he was a surprisingly funny guy. He opened with a joke—"I want to thank Mister Rowan and Mister Martin for flying me out, at great expense, in a plane with two right wings."

They were topical, they were current, they were young, and they were smart. Ruth Buzzi, Joanne Worley, and Henry Gibson were incredible. Arty Johnson was the man who had an incredible dedication to the bit that works so well in material that is controversial, especially political work.

And then there's Goldie Hawn.

She's not great at the whole comedy thing in this format, but the writers and directors knew exactly how to use her to get the most out of her appearance. She was the big break-out star, and when she had regular scripted material, she was amazing!

# Wide Wide World of Sports



There would be no ESPN without The Wide Wide World of Sports. It's not the show that brought sports to TV, but it was the show that brought ALL sports to TV. There had been sports on TV dating back to the earliest days, but you'd never have seen Daredevils, or motorcycle racing, or various other, not-every-day sports that were out there.

Does that concept sound familiar?

The real bread-and-butter of Wide Wide World of Sports was Boxing, and most specifically, it was Muhammad Ali and Howard Cosell. The two had amazing chemistry, though Ali's charisma made it seem like he had chemistry with everyone. The two changed how TV covered boxing, which had been on TV since the very beginning. It turned the hype for a fight into a thing, and it made stars of those who could talk well. Ali perfected his schtick by combining the ideas of the characters Freddy Blassie and Gorgeous George (there's that name again!) and adding his phenomenal boxing skill to the mix.

I believe ABC/ESPN/Disney has nearly all of the series archived, and there are a lot of archives that hold secondary copies.



# The Moon Landing

There is the most iconic image of the 1960s. Neil Armstrong bounding onto the surface of the Moon. NASA was a huge influence on the history of science, and on computers, but the biggest thing here is the footage.

If you've never seen the film *The Dish*, you may be unaware that it wasn't an easy thing to get those images out to the world. It took a bunch of work by the good people of Australia, and a number of the pieces of equipment that were used in that relaying of images are in the collection of my friend Max Burnett down in Oz.

This is an important moment in the history of America, and especially in the history of American sciences. It was likely the most-watched program of all-time, as every station played the feed in the US, and many places around the world. It has been replayed so many times, and the footage itself is likely why the "Fake Moon Landing" trope took off. It was on TV, not a real source, only an entertainment system.

The footage has been lost more than once, but there are hundreds of copies, and it's been restored at various times. The 16mm film footage from the Apollo missions are far better quality, and have been used in hundreds of places, and notably in a few Avant Garde short films.

What was the power of the Moon Landing footage? It gave a single thing that all of America could share. If this Registry has Culturally as a point of significance. While everyone knew where they were when Kennedy was shot, it was the Moon landing that had everyone in one place, sharing on program. That's a powerful moment, and the only time in television history that's been true...

Or at least the first time.



# The Exploding Whale clip

This is the first entry that is directly due to the internet, and is one of the most famous bits in the early history of the internet. The clip is from 1970, Oregon. A big ol' dead whale washes up, and they decide to blow it up. This wasn't exactly new, it had been done, though typically out in the water. They put too much dynamite in the whale, and it blew up roughly five times as much as they'd expected, sending whale chunks all over the place, crushing cars, raining whale pieces down from the Heavens.

Now, why is this on the list?

It's important to recognize that all forms of video are key, and that includes the internet. This clip was one of the earliest video clips on the internet, actually dating back to the days of USE-NET, and BBSs. The footage was shared around the world, and Dave Berry saw it and helped to make it famous.

The thing is, it is one of the best examples of a shared internet tradition. Even back in the dial-up days, folks had seen this footage. The fact that you almost certainly knew what I was talking about when I said "Exploding Whale Clip" likely says all that needs to be said.

There are a few places that hold high-quality copies, including the Paley center.

# BERLE'S BACK ON TV TONIGHT!

AND EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT

See The

## TEXACO STAR THEATER

America's No. 1 Television Show

8 P.M. WSPD-TV

Presented by

**YOUR TEXACO DEALER**

"The Best Friend Your Car Ever Had"



# Texaco Star Theater

Uncle Milty.

There were a few huge names in the early days of TV. The big ones were Gorgeous George, Edward R. Murrow, and Milton Berle. Uncle Milty was a well-known comedian, and he was probably the biggest star who made their way to TV prior to 1950. He had hosted a radio version of the show, but wasn't considered the full-time host at first. That changed, of course, because he ended up a gigantic star, and he sold more televisions than just about anything.

Well, except for maybe Gorgeous George.

*Texaco Star Theater* was the biggest show in the world on Tuesday nights, which made the fact that Milton Berle supposedly refused to go on unless an African-American act was allowed to perform. Texaco gave in and the Four Step Brothers performed, and Berle was allowed to bring stars like Bill Robinson and Lena Horne on to the show.

The vision a lot of folks have is of Uncle Milty wearing drag, and performing many of the skits he had done in his Vaudeville act. This was a classic bit, and bringing it to TV was an easy thing.

The weird bit is that the show was the number one show in 1950 (and likely 1948 and 49, though Nielsen ratings weren't around then), and then a top five show from 1951 through 1955. The real competition was from the advance in the style of shows. *I Love Lucy* was the big player in the latter period of the show, and it was out of the Top Ten by 1956. The show was ground breaking, not in content, but in popularity. It was an impressive run, and just about everywhere has copies of shows, including the Paley, the UCLA archive, and the Library of Congress.

And how could you now include a show which was fronted by a guy known as "Mr. Television"?



# The Tonight Show

It is impossible to make a list about TV without including The Tonight Show, and it's impossible to ignore than there's a giant name attached—Johnny Carson. He helmed the show for 30 years, but to give you an idea of how powerful the show itself is, that's not even half the run of the show. It had been around for eight years before Carson, and it's been 26 years since he left the show. Jay Leno also did more individual episodes, Carson did 4 shows most weeks, and often used guest hosts, while Leno was a workhorse.

What The Tonight Show did, and still does, is provide an avenue for talent to come on television and be humanized. They sit down, on a couch, and they chat with the host. They banter, they might also perform, but it's really the interaction between the host and the guest that is the key. It's not about the interview, it's about two people talking, chatting. The key evidence for that? The fact that they often actively call out when they are doing the plug for the project that is the reason they are appearing.

There are so many important moments which happened on the show. Carson's last episodes were amazing, especially Bette Midler's singing and Robin Williams performance. The legendary Hugh Grant appearance right after getting caught with a sex worker. Jack Paar interviewing Castro. The legendary poem read by Jimmy Stewart about his dog. All of those are huge reasons why it's on the list, but there's also the re-curring bits that are so ingrained in our popular culture. The monologue, Carson's legendary Carnak the Magnificent, Leno's interviews out on the streets, even Fallon's phenomenal sing-alongs with The Roots and guests on children's instruments and Lip Sync battles. It's all become a major part of the zeitgeist, and that's continued for more than 65 years.

NBC and a TON of other archives all hold a large amount of Tonight Show material... save for Carson's first show!



Broadcast interruptions in the 1980s seemed to happen about three or four times a year. Usually, they were fleeting, and often they'd be stopped before any sort of message could appear. This was not the case with the Max Headroom broadcast interruption in Chicago.

There were actually two interruptions, obviously by the same person, where a fella in a Max Headroom mask made cryptic comments. There's been a lot of great debate over who it was what done the deed (best podcast episode on the matter is the majestic Thinking Sideways—<http://www.thinkingsidewayspodcast.com/max-headroom-broadcast-signal-intrusion/>) and they've never caught whoever did it.

Things we only kinda understand is how it happened. A broadcast interruption is easy to get—you get a signal that is stronger than the regular transmission signal and thus override it. In this case, the transmission tower was on top of the Sears Tower, the tallest building in the world!

Now, why is it on this list?

It is one of the few broadcast interruptions that is well documented and collected. The reason for that is Dr. Who. Because there are so many crazy Dr. Who fans, and the series wasn't widely-available on VHS in 1987, taping the series off of PBS was a major thing, and thus, there's more than one copy of it captured.

Television has rarely been a public thing. Yes, Public Access, UHF-style, existed (and exists) but broadcast interruptions is one of the rare personal forms television broadcasting.

One of the most important of all TV sitcoms was *I Love Lucy*. It was also one of the most important cultural touchstones, one of the most popular of all television programs of the 1950s, and one that still has ripples through to today. If there's a funny redhead, you will see some comparison to Lucille Ball. It's not at all rare that shows or films will reference various famous moments from the show, not typically the legendary candy-making scene. It firmed up many if not most of the tropes that ruled TV comedy through the 1980s, before the explosion of the television writer of the 1990s with *Roseanne*, *Home Improvement*, and *The Simpsons*. The fact is, without *I Love Lucy*, the path of television comedy would be so very different.

The question is how does the show itself hold up?

Pretty well, and far better than almost all the other comedy on TV from the 1950s. Lucy's timing is impeccable, and the rest of the cast is great! Desi Arnez, while never being a great human according to many, has a particularly fascinating kind of comedic timing that plays really well off of Lucy. Ethel Mertz, played by Vivian Vance, knew how to amplify the scripts she received, and it's often easy to see where she took her shots when given the chance, partly because she felt like Lucy was over-whelming her. When she sings in the talent show, she's amazing. She's got great timing, but she's also an AMAZING side-kick, and I don't know if her version of reacting would have allowed her to be a great leading lady.

There are no lack of places that have *I Love Lucy* archived, including CBS (which I believe has every episode, and has released a bunch of commercial versions of the series) and the Paley. I'm not 100% sure who acquired the DESILU studios IP, it may well have been Paramount when it acquired *Star Trek*, but *I Love Lucy* is very safely preserved.



I Love Lucy



Bill Cosby is a sexual predator and a rapist who is rightly in jail. That we must first mention before we discuss the fact that his most significant show, *The Cosby Show*, was an important part of the image of the 1980s, that is played a role in the launching of a new African-American television presence, and was one of the most popular television programs in the era where network TV was king.

And it must be mentioned that it was during this period that Cosby committed many of his crimes.

*The Cosby Show* was a very typical family sitcom, but Cosby has always had a magnetism and energy that played to an incredibly broad audience. Listen to his comedy albums to get a good sense of that. The morals portrayed in the series are very smart, and a bit stiff seen from today. The key to the quality of the show was the cast. The scripts were so weak when compared even to *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, but the cast pulled it up. The openings were wonderfully well done, at least after the second season, and they did cute things like lip-synch segments, made the most of the impressive cast, especially Tempestt Bledsoe and Phylicia Rashad. The guest stars, from Stevie Wonder to Dizzy Gillespie, added so much flavor to the show, and especially when the younger cast members interacted with them. There's a great moment between Gillespie and the young Rudy that is both precious and well-manufactured.

And I think that's a big part of the appeal; *The Cosby Show* felt loose and at least a little real, while being completely and utterly manufactured to feel so. That could be used as a metaphor for Bill Cosby's image as a whole, no?

It sucks that this has to be said every time we talk about *The Cosby Show*, but to simply talk about the show without mentioning how it was headed up, on-screen and behind the scenes, by a monster would be utterly wrong.

Philco made the coolest TVs ever. The Philco brand was also a major manufacturer, and advertiser, and thus, we get *Philco Television Playhouse* (which also had a few other titles, but let's stay with this one). The teleplay wasn't invented by PTP, but it was one of the most successful in terms of viewer, of artistry, and of impact.

Impact, you ask? Yes. It was the show that really launched the career of Paddy Chayefsky. He's a major figure, and is arguably the greatest dramatist to come out of the early days of television. Watching his versions of *Marty*, which he wrote, and the various other scripts he produced, you can see that he understood both the medium's limitations, and how to work within them without alienating the audience's expectations. This can be seen by the fact that the show received the Peabody award. Chayefsky can also be considered one of the greatest stage/screenwriters of the last century because he won three Academy Awards, one of which for *Marty*, though the theatrical version and not the television version.

Of course, the other name that is nearly as significant is Fred Coe.

You've never heard of Fred Coe, most likely, unless you're a television geek. The man was a legendary producer, and he had the thing that is so important if you're a producer who wants to be remembered—he knew talent before most others. He found Chayefsky, and a bunch of others, and brought them to the *Philco Television Playhouse*. He was a great producer, and a good director, and beyond TV, he produced a few Broadway plays and films. This may be the best early example of a series that is largely made by the vision and understanding of a producer. There aren't a lot of folks who you can say that about, with Roddenberry, Serling, Lear, diBona, Whedon, and Rhimes coming to mind. Coe's work behind the scenes led to the greatness that made it to the screen.

There are several episodes of *Philco Television Playhouse* including David Shaw's *0-for-37*, which is a phenomenal piece including Eva Marie Saint.





Yes, Boxing! This is one of the biggest fights in history, and more importantly to this list, it is likely the most-watched boxing match of all-time. There are estimates that two billion people watched this fight around the world. It was the peak of Heavyweight boxing on television, and one of the greatest rivalries of all-time.

Let's look at it in a couple of ways. Ali is one of the greatest television personalities of the 1960s and 70s. No athlete, before or since, has ever had the recognition that Ali had in his prime. Or passed his prime, really. Even today, his name is synonymous with boxing. He was the Greatest, and there was no debate. Leon Spinks was an awesome boxer, one who could go toe-to-toe with just about anyone, including Ali, who had already crested the hill of his career. The talking of both guys sold the fight, but more importantly, the fight was going to be amazing.

There will almost certainly never be a fight this Big again, and I doubt there will ever be a fight that garners ratings in the mid-40s. That's a ridiculous number, even for those days. 90 million people were watching, and most of them were rooting for Ali.

Ali was his story. From his talking the best trash ever heard, to backing up every word in the ring, to the conversion to Islam, to his refusing military service, to his kinda sad but amazing post-fight years, Ali was never anything but incredible, and I can't imagine what American television sports would be without him.

I'm not 100% sure I buy into the moniker "The Greatest Game Ever Played" but I will say it might be the greatest game ever televised.

The Pirates and the Yankees were head-to-head in the World Series, and this was the pivotal game, and it all came down to a player named Bill Mazeroski. He was an amazing fielder, one of the best ever, but at the plate, he was just good. Here, he hit a walk-off home run to beat the Yanks and bring Pittsburgh a World Series championship.

It actually means slightly more than that. It was a great game, and more importantly, while baseball had been a key part of the world of television since the beginning, this made it so much bigger. Because all the problems we have with baseball, the slow nature of the game, have always been there, but here, drama was infused. It was a great game, and if you've seen any of it, you know that there was drama in it. It was a 10-9 game, and the Yankees were the massive team of the decade, but they got beat in a great moment.

Also, the only surviving footage is from Bing Crosby.

You see, Bing had a lot of fingers in a lot of pies. One was AMPEX, the video tape company, and another was the Pittsburgh Pirates. He had a Kinescope made of the game by AMPEX so he could watch it later, and after 49 years, they found it in Bing's wine cellar. That's how a lot of this sort of stuff survives, or moulders away into nothingness with no one noticing.

The game is preserved, and is the only one of the 1960 World Series games that still survives, and that makes it historic enough, but the fact that it was a game of high-drama that still thrills.



# Game 7 of the 1960 World Series

You knew there would be wrestling, right? I've already talked about it, but really, wrestling was a major part of television at the beginning, and the Cable TV explosion was both fed by, and magnified, the state of wrestling at the time. The biggest event in the history of pro wrestling was WrestleMania III, and it really represents the importance of pay-per-view.

Pay-per-view was still somewhat new, and in fact the closed-circuit play of WrestleMania III was very popular, but with Boxing in a sort of a lull, it was easily the most popular PPV of the time, and the share of the PPV universe that ordered WrestleMania III was huge, and hasn't been surpassed to this day.

WrestleMania III was the height of the 1980s wrestling boom. Almost a decade before the Attitude Era, aka the WCW assault, that led to the most profitable period of American pro wrestling. The 1950s probably saw more mainstream public visibility, but the 1980s saw the rise of the biggest star in American wrestling history, and this show, more than anything, established pay-per-view as a significant part of the entire wrestling package. Hogan, before the revelation of his myriad problems (including racism, sexism, drug use, etc), was the biggest star in the world, and turned that into the biggest mainstream Hollywood star from wrestling until the rise of The Rock.

WrestleMania 3 is the high-water mark, one of the biggest shows of all-time, and one that proved PPV, and that represented the power of wrestling in general. This is 100% the kind of show that needs to be included on a registry like this, and one that I think will continue to be important.

Of course, the WWE currently has the show available on the WWE Network. I believe it's in the Paley Center as well, and certainly the Library of Congress.





You could make a strong case for the 1980s starting at 12:01am, August 1st, 1981. That's the moment MTV came on the air. I wasn't watching when the first video played, but I certainly did see the second, *You Better Run* by Pat Benetar. It was that day that I can pinpoint the first time I heard what might be my favorite song: *Baker Street* by Gerry Rafferty. The first twenty-four hours were a combination of music videos, VJs talking, and most importantly, post-modernism.

Let's start with the very moment of introduction. The first thing that came on was a shot of the Space Shuttle on the launch pad. They pull back and we see a minute+ of the Shuttle getting ready to launch. The shuttle was such a big deal that it was an obvious thing to use to bring us into what I am pretty sure they understood as the defining channel of the 1980s.

After ignition, they cut to a Saturn-5 rocket taking off, and then the famed Astronaut on the Moon with the MTV flag. That was a great metaphor!

The big deal was VJs, and the first of them, the one that they used as the front man for the big launch, was Mark Goodman. He was a good lookin' guy workin' it! They stressed that this was Radio for Television (which sounds a lot like the recent "It's Twitter for Facebook!" thing you get in Silicon Valley these days) and Mark was the guy who introduced it. Alan Hunter was next, and he's the All-American blonde guy of the team. Then, it was Martha Quinn, who 75% of the young men watching fell in love with on first sight. JJ Jackson, the one African-American and the oldest of the team, and likely the smartest about music. He is also the only former VJ who has passed away. He was my personal fave.

Except for Nina Blackwood. She was the sexy rocker chick, I believe she had done Playboy in 1978, and the perfect VJ for the Pat Benetar/Joan Jett mode.

The first Hour is on YouTube, but the first 24 hours list of videos is at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_first\\_music\\_videos\\_aired\\_on\\_MTV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_first_music_videos_aired_on_MTV)



# All in the Family

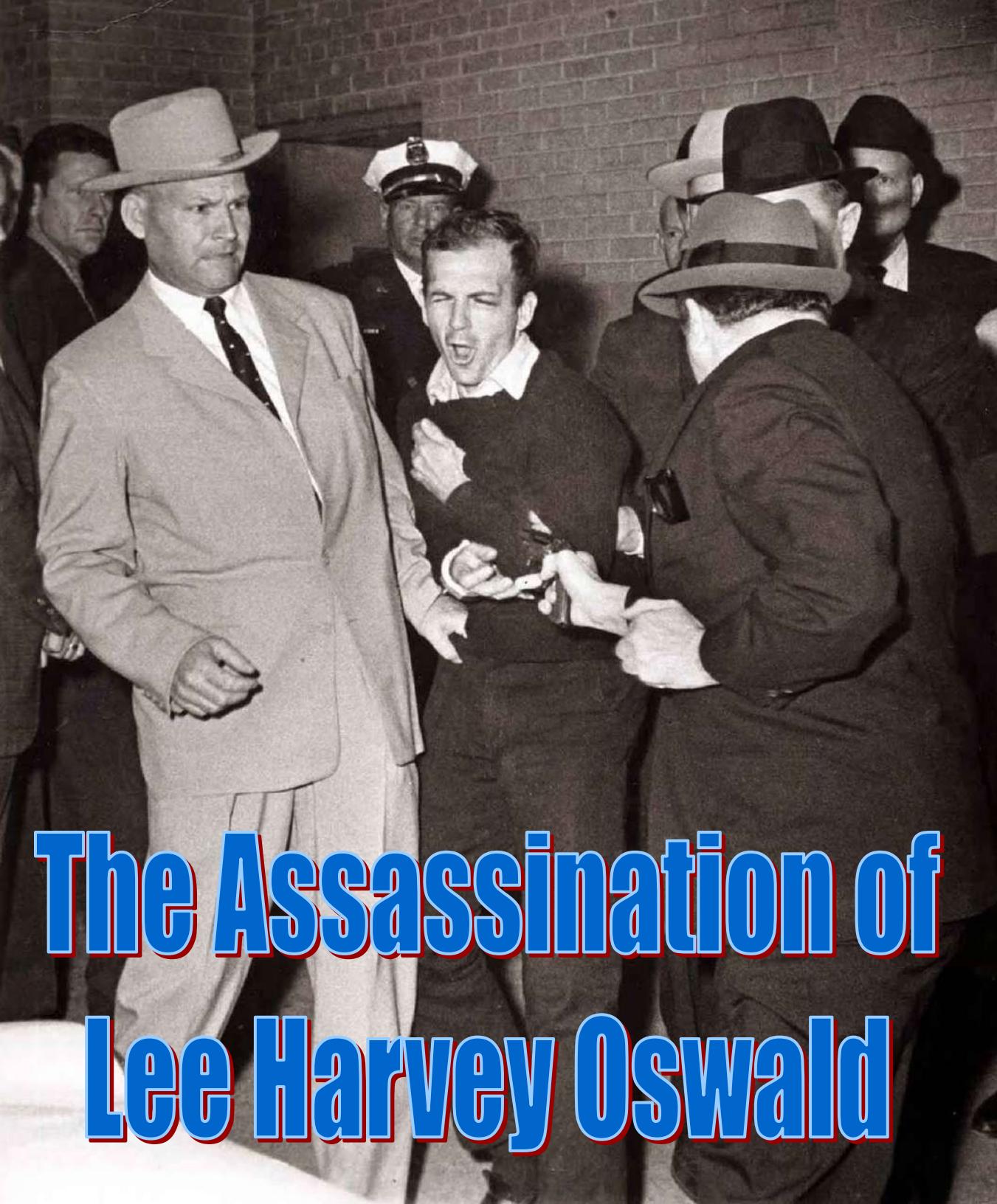
I always hated *All in the Family*. It was the kind of show that represented in the worst of television. The way that comedy is set-up, delivery, punch-line, recall, which is pretty typical. The biggest problem with that is it makes everything a little too stiff, too pat, too simplistic. When I was a kid, it was too dramatic to be a comedy, but it had the laughs. Nowadays, I love that idea, that you can shift between tones, is what I look for in television. I've revisited, and while Carol O'Connor is great at what he does, it's still a stiff comedy, though far better written than any of the other stuff that was on TV.

Of course, today it's probably more important to try and get Archie Bunker than ever before. In the 1970s, it was a reaction to the hippies, to women's lib, to the Civil Rights struggle. Now, we have to look at him as what we're dealing with as the at least slightly younger generation. The Boomers, who were the ones that Archie Bunker was so confounded by, are in the role of Archie, dealing with the world around them by retreating into his world and then coming to a slight realization from time to time, without really changing much.

Of course, there's the legendary episode where Edith nearly gets raped.

*Edith's 50th Birthday* is a landmark in the portrayal of sexual assault on TV, which is something that *All in the Family* had tackled in a sense before with the near-date rape of Gloria a few seasons before, but here, it's dealt with much more realistically, and Maureen Stapleton's performance is really strong, but the writing here is exceptional. The way Archie is written, being very un-Archie Bunker, is what makes this episode so powerful. He tries and tries to make Edith feel loved, cared for, safe, and he can't really manage. It's what it's like to be the partner in this sort of scenario. Norman Lear consulted with Rape Crisis professionals, which shows in the way it goes.

*All in the Family* is in all sorts of archives.



# The Assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald

Wherever you stand on the matter of the JFK assassination as a conspiracy vs. Lone Gunman (I'm of the conspiracy mind, but I am probably not as crazy into it as some) the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald is one of the most important of all the moments of the 1960s. It was the first murder shown on TV Live. It was the point where the Kennedy Assassination became something more than just a single event, and really changed the way people viewed the assassination as a whole.

It has been played over and over again, and it is, along with those from the Zapruder film, that so many people associate with the assassination as a whole.

I re-watched it and it's so obvious to the Conspiracy-minded Lizard Brain of mine that he was being led out to the slaughter. You only have to look at the way people seem to give Ruby a clear path at him. Then again, it's also a shock and surprise thing, and watching the reaction to it is incredible as it looks like they're trying their damnedest to get him off of LHO, but he's on him like a bulldog.

Few other individual moments had the impact on generations than the JFK assassination, and Lee's murder is a big part of that.



# The Flintstones

My all-time favorite Halloween costume was Fred Flintstone. According to the Simpsons Family Album, it was also Homer's fave. I have always loved The Flintstones, and Fred was a big reason why.

And so was Dino. I loved Dino.

The Flintstones is basically a gentler version of The Honeymooners. Fred, a gruff, abrasive, yet somehow incredibly loving and often gentle, man with a family. He makes poor choices, and he has too much fun compared to his responsibilities. He's a bowler, a member of the Loyal Order of Water Buffalos, and has a sweet little daughter, Pebbles.

And he's married to the amazing Wilma.

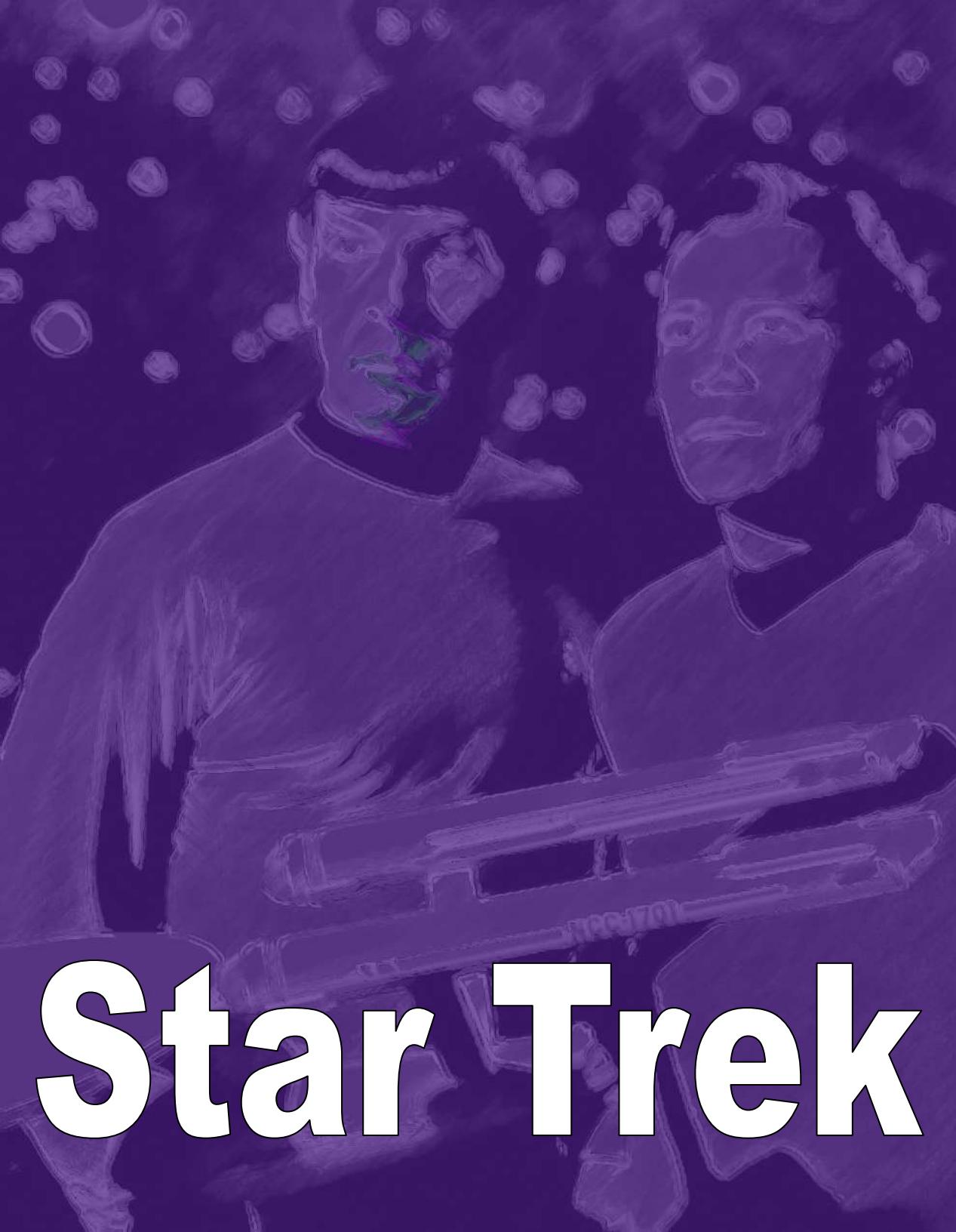
His best friend is Barney Rubble. Barney's wife, Betty, is Wilma's best friend. They work at Slate Granite & Rubble.

OK, you probably knew all of that, but that's only a tiny fraction of what makes it so cool, and honestly, it's a lot like Weird Al.

I'll explain.

Weird Al works because the basics are completely recognizable. We know what a vacuum cleaner is, what it looks like, and we know what a dinosaur looks like. When the two are thrown together, it's humorous! We recognize, and we are thrown why it makes sense, and that's funny!

The funny things, watching it as an adult, *The Flintstones* has the same problems as 1950s TV, but there is no doubt that it was a massively important part of the history of television animation, as the first Prime Time Cartoon, and one that has had massive cultural impact. .



# Star Trek

You knew it was coming, right? *Star Trek* may be the most television show of all-time when you take the impact on individuals in the world outside of television. The idea of TV fandom didn't start with *Star Trek*, but I can't think of any that have been as important, or as large. But, if you're looking at the Registry as recognizing works that are 'Historically, Culturally, or Aesthetically significant' than Culturally is the BIG one, and not just for the concept of Trekkers.

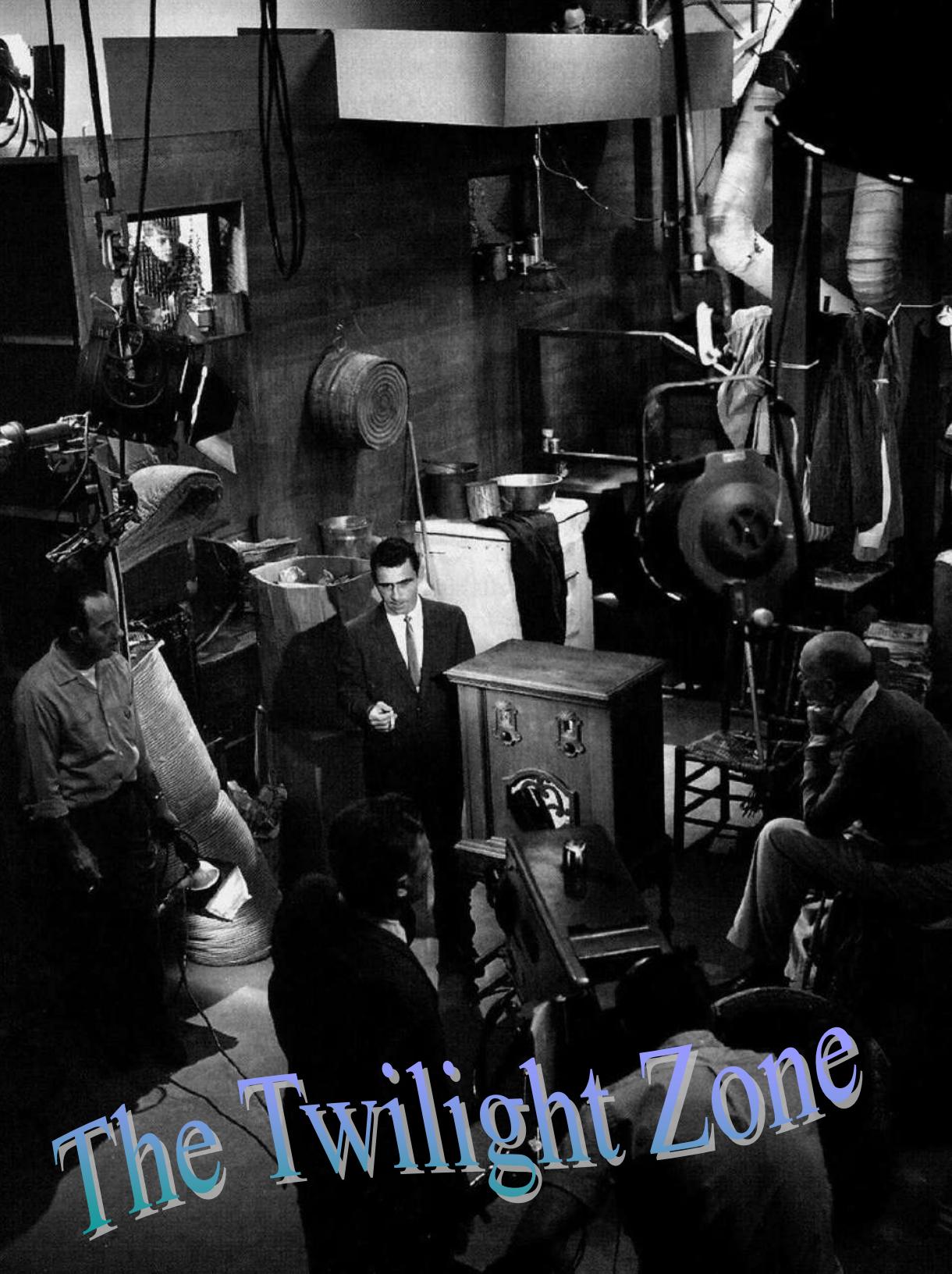
*Star Trek* gave us Modern Sciences.

You will have no problem finding folks in the sciences who were inspired by *Trek* to enter the sciences. This is especially true of people of color and women. I ask a question during every Oral History I do for the Computer History Museum with the question "Did you experience science fiction when you were a kid?" and most have mentioned *Star Trek*.

The show itself works well in some directions, most notably in philosophy, but less-so in dialogue, and the show itself, if you watch a bunch of episodes, is fairly repetitive. The characters are pretty broad until they get their focus episode.

And those focus episodes are amazing, particularly when it's Spock.

And yes, there's the first Interracial Kiss on prime time television,, which was huge, and the Globalism of the show, and on and on. There's no question it's on the Registry, and it will continue to help define the possibilities of what a show can do.



# The Twilight Zone

The show that really changes the way that television treated science fiction writing was *The Twilight Zone*, especially when you compare it to the other shows that were working in the anthology mode, *The Outer Limits*. The themes are a bit heavier, the writing a lot more naturalistic, for the time, and the performances were much cleaner. All you have to do is watch the way that William Shatner plays his role in *Nightmare at 20,000 Feet* to see how they took it more seriously as far as acting goes.

They also brought in the top names in sci-fi being adapted or writing, like Matheson, Charles Beaumont, George Clayton Johnson, and Ray Bradbury, Manly Wade Wellman, Damon Knight. The connection between *The Twilight Zone* and written science fiction at the time are huge. It's an impressive snapshot, though some of the names that were huge at the time, notably Asimov and Heinlein, were nowhere to be seen... which makes me happy!

The show is hugely influential in a number of directions, but unlike *Star Trek*, which spawned a fandom, *The Twilight Zone* was a major impact on a generation of writers, but not only science fiction writers, but writers for television and film in general. You can see a change in the way that structures for thrillers and speculative fiction works very much reflect Serling's ideal. Without *The Twilight Zone*, you don't have *Shaymalan*, or *Twin Peaks*, or pretty much anything by Carpenter or Demme.

It's also WIDELY archived!

You can not make a list of the most important shows in the history of television without including the longest-running show in US History—Meet The Press.

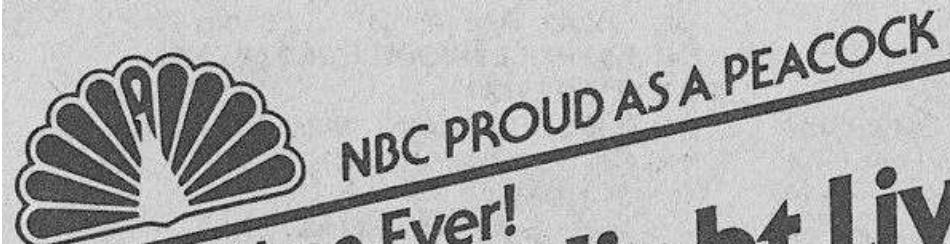
I've only watched rarely, but it's always been roughly the same idea: give people a slightly more in-depth look at the key issues of the day through longer-form discussion than is really possible in the traditional evening news format. That's meant that we've had incredible numbers of important people, from Presidents to prime ministers, preachers to pundits, appearing at key times.

That makes it historic, of course, but it also defined what the form of these kinds of shows would be. *Face the Nation*, the second-longest running show of its kind, was certainly patterned after it, and many local and cable shows were as well. Without *Meet the Press*, there would be no CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, or any other major news presentation station. *Meet the Press* proved that a strenuous news program has a place, and has for 71 years now.

The funny thing is NBC has never been good about driving home the idea that *Meet the Press* is a far more relevant cultural entity than a current events show. It defined televised political discourse for two generations, and that makes it important.

It's in pretty much every archive in some form or another.





NBC PROUD AS A PEACOCK

Livelier than Ever!

# Saturday Night Live- The Next Generation!

10:30PM

They're the stars of the 80's...  
Join Denny Dillon, Gilbert  
Gottfried, Gail Matthius,  
Joe Piscopo, Ann Risley  
and Charles Rocket  
for this eagerly awaited  
season premiere!

Hosted by  
**ELLIOTT GOULD**

Musical Guests  
**KID CREOLE AND  
THE COCONUTS**



**SEASON PREMIERE!**



2 3

7 8 24

What can you say about a series that has gone through so many reinventions as *Saturday Night Live*? The 1970s cast featured legends (Belushi, Garrett Morris, Ackroyd, Chase, Murray, Radner, Lorraine Newman, and Jane Curtin) and defined what comedy was going to be in the 1980s a full five years early. The show was a showcase for comedy, and just as important was the role it played in providing great musical acts. A number of bands broke when they played SNL, the one most often pointed to is No Doubt, and moments such as Elvis Costello's playing *Radio, Radio* much to the annoyance of creating producer Lorne Michaels, or the infamous Pope-tearing performance of Sinead O'Conner.

The most impressive thing is that it's lasted so long and been the launching pad for so many careers. You have folks like Mike Myers, Phil Hartman, Eddie Murphy, Kirsten Wiig, Tina Fey, and on and on and on. The casts, and especially the writing, has varied in quality, but has never failed to deliver at least something funny.

The preservation status of SNL is pretty impressive.

# Camera three



At first, I was thinking that I should only list *The Cradle Will Rock* episode of *Camera Three* from 1964. This was the first filmed version of the show, and one that I think stands alone (I've seen about ten minutes of footage from it, and it's great!) I then started looking into the series as a whole, and found that it was a key component in the argument that television could support the spoken and performing arts in a deep way, or at least not superficially.

*Camera Three* did present things like poets reading from their work, or plays, or even musical performances. It was a daytime weekend show, and one that ran for more than 20 years. If it sounds a lot like PBS fare, you're right, and it ended its run on PBS in 1980s, leaving CBS where it had been since the 1950s.

It is often cited as the first TV series to give poetry a chance, and Ogden Nash appeared more than once, and I believe that Ferlinghetti did as well.

But really, it is the cultural importance of being the television premiere of *Cradle Will Rock* that is the biggest clang of this bell. The play was famously a part of the Federal Theatre Project, and the initial production was directed by Orson Welles, produced by John Housman, and ended up being a sort of theatre in the round experience that has informed many of the further productions. The 1964 version from *Camera Three* is an excellent record of the show, and I believe that Blitzstein had died before it aired. The fact that CBS aired a leftist musical during peak-Cold War is astounding, and especially when you consider that the show had a history of painful births and deaths.

*Camera Three* is held at several archives, including The Paley Center.



This was a gimme, no? I envision it as the 24 hours of coverage from September 11th, 2001 from ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, Fox News, MSNBC, CNN, UNIVISION, and probably others. These are almost all archived, so that's not a problem.

The fact is, this is the single most unifying event of the 21st century so far. We all have our stories, and a lot of what we understand outside of our own experience is through the news cover. The images are seared onto our brains, and in a way that is forever accessible. I can only think of the way that tower fell that was played over and over, the images of the burning buildings, the wall of dust, the helicopter shots. They are what I know of 9-11, and they are among the most important images in American television history.