

Khrushchev's Story Jinxed by All-Stars

By Rick du Brow

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—The City of Anaheim, Calif., continues to be a jinx to Nikita Khrushchev.

When he made his visit to America as Premier, he was unable to see Disneyland—which is in Anaheim—in the well-known incident that angered him.

And Tuesday night, the anxiously awaited one-hour NBC-TV special featuring his views and life in retirement was delayed until late at night in much of the Nation because the All-Star Baseball Game, on the same network—and at Anaheim—went into lengthy overtime.

The scheduling of this important Khrushchev documentary on the heels of a sports event that had the potential of running long was most ill-advised. It was a tight fit at best.

Especially since this is television's slow season, it does seem that NBC-TV might have had the better judgment to put it on a day or two later, when there would have been no chance of a conflict.

But with the baseball game

running late, the documentary began about 11 p.m. in the East—an hour later than scheduled—and it is safe to say the audience probably fell off in numbers there, in the Midwest and elsewhere. Even a 10 to 11 o'clock show has trouble holding an audience as a rule, when viewers have to get up early.

And it must have been terribly frustrating for the program's indefatigable producer, Lucy Jarvis—who came up with another memorable broadcast—to feel her audience slipping away as the hour grew late. In effect, it was like putting the network's page one story of the day on the back page, and running sports out front.

If there was a possible amusing aspect to the late start in much of the country, it was imagining how Soviet observers of the program in New York and Washington, D.C., might try to explain to Moscow that a baseball game held up the broadcast about Khrushchev. I'm sure there's a script there for Billy Wilder somewhere.

AT ANY RATE, the program, whose large advance publicity was negated in part by the network because of the late start, included the promised "exclusive films, photographs and voice tapes," with reporter Edwin Newman the Anchorman.

The title of the hour was "Khrushchev in Exile—His Opinions and Revelations," which has a pleasing, dated, turn-of-the-century, muckraking McClure's Magazine ring to it. You hardly come across the word "Revelations" in titles any more, but there were opinions by Khrushchev, and provocative ones.

Talking at his comfortable country home 17 miles from Moscow, he expressed his admiration for the late President Kennedy, his dislike for Richard Nixon, his amiable feeling toward Henry Cabot Lodge, his lack of high regard for President Eisenhower's ability and his criticism of Mao Tse-tung.

NBC-TV got its material from private sources, and it was in fact an amazing broadcast simply because we were visiting with a former Soviet Head of State just the way we might watch an hour about a retired American President. Newman, however, did offer a critical analysis of Khrushchev's naturally one-sided view of history.

THE HOME MOVIES of the former Premier with his family, eating, walking outside his home, taking pictures like any

amateur photographer proud of his expensive equipment (in his case, a Hasselblad)—all this was effective as counterpoint to films of his background and political career. And the Russian music was superb in setting the tone.

NBC-TV's hour also had a healthy perspective of the human frailties in all of us, Heads of State and former heads of state included. What's more, it had the sense to know that when you have a real story you don't need frills and simplicity is the best course.

The only complaint one can register regards the commercials. As with last week's CBS-TV documentary, "The Anderson Platoon," about men at war in Vietnam, the advertising intrusions were offensive beyond words. History sponsored by sleeping tablets is unnerving.