

The Washington Star

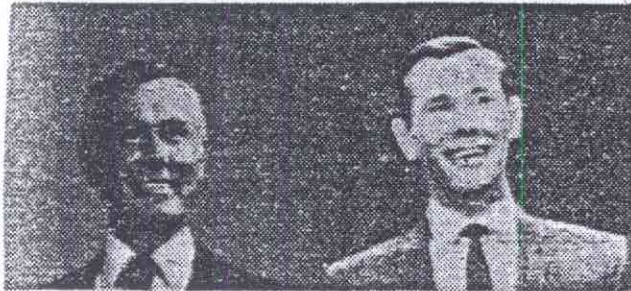
# Portfolio

● Amusements

SECTION B

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1977

## TV TONIGHT



Johnny Carson (1977) stands next to a cardboard dummy of Johnny Carson (1962), in honor of his 15th anniversary show, which airs tonight.

## As for Oswald's 'Trial': Forget It

By Bernie Harrison

Washington Star Staff Writer

What if Jack Ruby hadn't shot Lee Harvey Oswald dead and Oswald had come to trial? What if nobody watches when he does? That's both the premise and the risk of ABC's two-part flight of historical-fancy, "The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald," which begins tonight (WJLA-7 at 9), and concludes on Sunday. If there seems to be no end to the speculation and controversy over the agonizing events in Dallas, this distillation of rumor, by dramatists, with presumptions and inference presented as fact, could be just the show to do it.

Our previewer, Judy Flander, looked it over and says: "It was a bum idea to do a detective-courtroom drama based on the what-ifs and the might-have-beens had Oswald lived to stand trial for the assassination of John Kennedy."

"Besides the purposelessness of the four-hour proceedings, they fail to match the drama of the original events, especially the on-air shooting of Oswald by Ruby. After that, anything else is anticlimax. Even with the verdict being left as a surprise for critics as well as audiences (only the first 3½ hours were available for screening), "The Trial" palls long before the first program is over.

"It lacks the emotional impact of that time. Even with a showing and a recreation of the assassination, "The Trial" doesn't move us. And the fictionalized events that follow leave us cold."

In leading roles are Ben Gazzara as the ambitious prosecuting attorney, Lorne Greene for the defense, and Oswald look-alike John Pleshette, an unknown. "As good as they are—and they are nothing if not con-