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SECTION E

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TV TONIGHT

WETA-26 Begins New Opera Series

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The Ratings Game

What ABC proved when it won last week in the Nielsen is the strength of its "junk" shows (as CBS President Bob Wussler described them). Even though ABC's own special, the two-part "Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald" was a flop (32nd and 33rd on the list), and NBC had the No. 1 show (the Ali title fight, with a smashing 57 percent of the audience) and some strong movie dramas, ABC was still first, for the fourth straight week of the new season. The junk is hanging tough. ABC's average rating for the week, 20; NBC, 19; CBS, 16.5. An expected CBS surge as it resumed its Sunday night regulars failed to materialize, although Archie Bunker, with a good hour show, finished fifth, and "Alice" was seventh. The top ten: 1, Ali; 2, "Laverne and Shirley"; 3, "Happy Days"; 4, "Charlie's Angels"; 5, "All in the Family"; 6, "Three's Company"; 7, "Alice"; 8, "In the Matter of Karen Ann Quinlan," tied with "Baretta"; and 10, "What's Happening!" "Soap" was 12th. The Ali fight kayoed Redd Foxx (last), and the No. 2 and No. 3 networks are now scrambling and shifting to cut their losses, as reported yesterday.