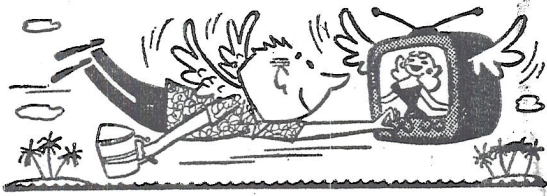


Terrence O'Flaherty



The Missing Nixons

BACK IN THE DAYS when a motel was called an "auto court" and a swimming pool was a "plunge," every movie at the neighborhood theater was preceded by a "newsreel," the only way to get the news in pictures — outside of the "rotogravure" section of the newspaper — was to go to the movies. Three decades of these talking news pictures will be the basis for a new ABC adult quiz series starting tonight titled "The Reel Game" (8:30, Channel 7).

The keeper-of-the-reels on this series is Jack Barry. I cornered him amongst the hors d'oeuvres at a stylish party given by ABC in Hollywood last week. He's just as bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as he was 20 years ago as the quizmaster of "Juvenile Jury" and its Geritol edition "Life Begins at 80." Along with buzzers and flashing lights Barry is a fundamental part of the Game-Show Game and I told him so.



Jack Barry

"Gosh, don't call them game shows," he said. "I think they're supposed to be called 'participation' shows today. 'Quiz show' sounds even worse, I've been told."

★ ★ ★

WHATEVER they're called, game shows have always been popular on television. In the long haul they're certain to be video's most permanent fixture along with westerns and situation comedies. There has never been a time when prime-time TV was without one.

The idea behind "The Reel Game" is to question contestants about famous events involving famous people and check their answers against old newsreel film.

The newsreel libraries are a rich record of mankind's achievements and losses during those decades

but they have been neglected almost as heartlessly as the television industry discarded its early productions. In some instances they seem to have been curiously looted to remove events from the film record.

Barry told me it took days of searching to locate films of Howard Hughes during the early days when he was dating all the starlets in Hollywood. Although his face was familiar on the newsreels of the early '30s it took a team of researchers to find the few feet that hand't been confiscated to satisfy Hughes' later mania for anonymity.

Also curiously difficult to locate are newsreel records of two public appearances of Richard Nixon



Elliot Richardson

which are of primary importance in the understanding of this complex man: His famous "Checkers" address to the people when running for the vice presidency on the Eisenhower ticket, and his sour-grapes press conference held the day following his defeat in the race for governor of California.

Ah, fame! In what strange corners are thy favors sought . . . When the final appraisal of our era is made by some historian of the future, the whole mid-section of the 20 Century might easily be classed as one gigantic quiz show without a smiling host to supply us common folk with the right answers.

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See 9 Mar 71
19 Jun 71