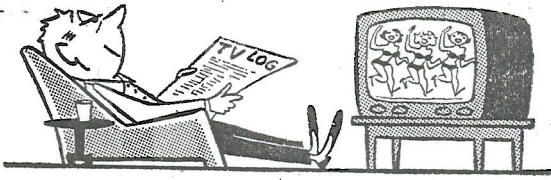


## Terrence O'Flaherty



## Baker and Scarlett O'Hara

TELEVISION'S newest young star is Howard Baker, the Republican Senator from Tennessee. Thursday night he broke away from his chores as vice chairman of the Watergate committee to appear on ABC's "Wide World of Entertainment." He came well prepared. After all, the U.S. Senate is the longest running talk-show of them all.



Howard Baker

an unquestioned victor. Two things not apparent on the Watergate show: the Senator is short in physical stature but very tall in political connections.

The show's host, Jack Paar, made the gallant suggestion that Baker "has so masterfully handled himself in the interrogation of witnesses that sooner or later he will have to deal with the fact that public adulation and media speculation are turning him into the most promising new presidential possibility in years..."

The Senator accepted the compliments with the same good humor he displays in the Caucus Room and came away from the program

HIS FATHER WAS a Congressman; his mother was a Congresswoman; his father-in-law was Senator Everett Dirksen; his cousin is Senator John Cooper of Kentucky; his brother-in-law is a Congressman from Virginia and his grandmother was a sheriff.

"Grandma is 94 now and she takes care of her 72-year-old daughter," said Baker. "The other day she phoned from the hospital to say that she had had an uncontrollable urge to go to the dog track and had fallen and hurt herself at the parimutuel window. So now I'm the only man living who has a 94-year-old grandmother who hurt herself falling down at a dog track while cashing a winning ticket!"

Among the other facts brought out in the interview: Baker manned a PT boat in World War II; he has a son, 20, and a daughter, 17; he was once a criminal attorney; he needs a new tailor; and he is a Presbyterian.

"ARE you?" exclaimed Paar with his usual mock surprise. "So am I. Do you know that I have NEVER met another one!"

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PAAR kept a mercifully low profile during the interview and recalled the similarity to a program many years ago on which he asked John F. Kennedy "Are you interested in the Presidency?" And he answered "Yes, I am."

Baker's answer to the same question Thursday night: "I'm going to tell you the truth, which is always the best thing to do. My answer is no, I am not. That doesn't mean that some day in the future I may not be." If I were to turn my attention to it seriously at this time or indicate any interest in it, I would do the gravest disservice to the job I'm trying to do now which is to try to find in an even-handed way what went wrong with the political system in America. So, as flattering as your question is, and as exhilarating as the thought may be, I must say — as Scarlett O'Hara said in 'Gone With The Wind' — 'I'll worry about that next week.'"

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INTERJECTING a final personal note, Paar said: "As Randy probably told you, when you talk about the house in Key Biscayne where Haldeman and Kissinger stayed, you now know that I live next door."

"Well, you must also know that Miss Paar should know that there's a subpoena to be served..." said the Senator, good naturedly.

But the parting shot was fired by British actor Robert Morley who followed Baker and said he found the Senator charming. "And I like his show. All that MONEY! Surely the Nixon staff must be the last people in America to pay cash! Everything else is travelers checks!"