Abortion? "It comes down to the question of whether a woman has a right to control her body." Capital punishment? "Barbarous."

Here is how the *Washington Journalism Review* describes Brokaw today: "Socially adept, Brokaw not only says and does the right things, he knows the right people, counting many glamourous figures from the world of art, entertainment, sports, and politics among his intimate friends. In California, he ran with a rich, politically liberal crowd that sought out the company of prominent journalists.... His life, his world, includes those people."

This is what it means for a Midwestern hick to make good in the culture of journalism. "Saying the right things" is code, in this milieu, for promulgating the values of liberalism and progressivism.

The culture of TV journalism

Donaldson and Brokaw are fairly typical of network reporters in the way they view their profession as somehow congruent with the liberal world view. It is very difficult for them to recognize the social and cultural forces that have shaped their work—not only their conclusions but also their assumptions. They frequently talk as though they regard themselves as bold and lonely dissidents in the corridors of power; whereas in fact they repeat the same lines of reasoning as scores of fellow practitioners of the trade. This may be regarded as the "herd of independent thinkers" syndrome that affected protesters in the 1960s, who considered themselves rugged individualists even as they did exactly what their professors told them.

The culture of TV journalism has been expertly described in a recent monograph, "TV News and the Dominant Culture," written by John Corry, TV critic for the *New York Times*, and published by the Media Institute in Washington. Corry maintains that an intellectual and artistic culture "rooted firmly in the political left" determines what constitutes a good news story and casts a negative odor around subjects and approaches to be shunned.

> *The cosmopolitan nature of the network news makes it virtually impossible for the traditionalist point of view to be aired.*
> *—Jeff Greenfield, ABC*

While facts and quotations are the substance of a news story, creating the impression of objectivity, Corry maintains the cultural predispositions inherited from the 1960s and 1970s give TV the "big picture...a starting point, an attitude."

"Issues and causes favored by conservatives are suspect, while probity clings to the other side," Corry writes. "Counterculture politics introduced the notion of victims, a category wide enough to include everyone except middle-aged white males.... At the same time, the causes of all the victims are joined" and TV news has taken on a redemptive mission to liberate all of them. Finally, television has accommodated itself to a "radical political vision" which acquiesces in the view that the United States is racist and imperialistic and culpable for most of the woes and inequities of the Third World. Because of their cultural insecurity, TV journalists force themselves to "apply a benevolent neutrality to anti-democratic, anti-Western forces."

Two prominent television journalists have acknowledged the manner in which the journalistic culture promotes the liberal program and metamorphoses reporters into a liberal mindset. "The news media in general are liberal," says Barbara Walters of ABC. "If you want to be a reporter, you are going to see poverty and misery, and you have to be involved in the human condition." In this we see several of the characteristics of TV reporters: hasty and false inference (I see poverty, therefore I am a liberal), arrogance (we're liberal, what the heck), and pseudo-profundity ("involved in the human condition"). Walter Cronkite, former CBS anchor, describes reporters as "certainly liberal, and possible left of center as well. I think most newspapermen by definition have to be liberal."

Bad news is good news

How does this liberalism affect reporters as they cover stories?

I asked Irving R. Levine of NBC News why his coverage during the economic recovery stressed those who were still out of work. "I have tried to bring a deep skepticism to the President's politics," Levine explains. "My reports on Reagan's economic programs focused on their deficiencies and contradictions."

Partly it is in the nature of reporting to examine problem areas, Levine notes. But also, "It's a he-- of a lot easier to get a story on the air when the unemployment rate is going up." So journalism, in order to be dramatic, must highlight the negative. As Levine succinctly puts it, "For producers and reporters, bad news is good news."

> *Issues and causes favored by conservatives are suspect, while probity clings to the other side.*
> *—John Corry, NY Times*

Addressing conservative complaints about derisive labeling for strategic defense, Jeff Greenfield of ABC News says, "The reason reporters call it Star Wars and not the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is because they are simplistic, not because they are ideological."

Certainly Greenfield is right that SDI is a somewhat dull and bureaucratic term. But why, I asked, do reporters during political conventions repeatedly refer to "ultraconservatives" and the "extreme right" but never "ultraliberals" or the "extreme left"? Greenfield acknowledges that reporters operate on different frames of ideological reference than most people. He cites the case of Jesse Jackson, "really a Third World radical, but he was never identified in those terms."

One reason the right is sometimes mistreated, Greenfield says, is that "TV reporters are slow to change their perceptions." They used to regard conservatism as outside the parameters of legitimate debate. "Not long ago we felt the only respectable figure on the right was Bill Buckley." But increasingly, according to Greenfield, "We are getting to the point where a Walter Williams or a Charles Murray is a valid source."

One area where Greenfield finds a definite bias is in TV coverage of social issues. "The cosmopolitan nature of the network news makes it virtually impossible for the traditionalist point of view to be aired," he says. He gives the example of a Reagan proposal to inform parents when their minor children receive contraceptives. This was nastily dubbed the "squeal rule," Greenfield says. "I have a young daughter and I want to know if she is being fitted for a diaphragm. At least this should be a proper subject for a policy debate. But most TV reporters covered the controversy as though the only people who favored the so-called squeal rule were anti-sex theocrats."

I asked Jim Miklaszewski of the NBC News about his report aired shortly before the vote on **contra** funding, whose thesis was that the **contras** were "an ill-trained, ill-equipped, ragtag peasant army, losing the war." And further, "Former Nicaraguan National Guardsmen lead the **contra** high command." Miklaszewski concluded, "After five years and $100 million in U.S. aid, the **contras**...have failed to win the support of most Nicaraguan people."

Anyone who saw the report would come away with the feeling: why are we helping people who are corrupt bozos, and losers to boot? Perhaps Miklaszewski was right that the **contras** are inadequate fighters, but shouldn't he have raised the question of whether it was lack of American funding and training that was the reason for this? Was it fair for him to assert, without qualification, that **contra** leaders were all former National Guardsmen from the Somoza regime? What evidence did Miklaszewski have that the **contras** were not supported by most Nicaraguans? I asked.

Miklaszewski started off by taking refuge behind the curtains of

Continued on page 22

Prayer, Catholic faith mocked by NBC's 'LA Law,' Philip Morris, AT&T

Mocking prayer and the Catholic faith was a major theme of NBC's December 18 episode of LA LAW. The offensive scene is little short of blasphemy.

LA LAW, written by William M. Finklestein and directed by Johnathan Sanger, is one of the most sexually oriented programs on prime-time. In this episode Arnie Becker, one of the lawyers who regularly bed-hops, gets involved with a client's wife.

The woman, according to her husband and her actions, is a nymphomaniac. She calls Becker and asks him to meet her at a restaurant. He agrees. The next scene has the two at a table and the following conversation occurs:

Woman: As soon as you walked through that conference room yesterday I knew I was going to go to bed with you. I can't put it any other way than that.

Becker: That's o.k. That way is fine. (He looks down.)

Woman: Disappointed? You seem a little distracted.

Becker: No. Actually I was offering up a prayer of thanksgiving for God's great gifts.

Woman: So he gets the credit, does he?

Becker: He gets the credit—I get you.

Woman: And what do I get?

Becker: Anything you want.

Woman: You're not put off (with my bluntness)?

Becker: Not hardly!

Woman: I'm glad. You see, Arnie, I don't have the time or the inclination for subtleties and *I dropped the pretense of being a good little girl the day I took off the white blouse and plaid skirt at Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrows.*

Becker: I would like to have seen you in that plaid skirt and blouse.

Woman: That can be arranged.

The two get up from the table and start to leave.

Woman: Should I start saying my Hail Marys now for what it is I'm about to do?

Becker: I think you better. As far as sin goes—I think this is going to be a big one.

In the next scene the two are in bed having just finished commiting adultery. The segment ends as Becker prepares to start *another sexual encounter. The entire scene is very graphic—worthy of no less than an R rating by Hollywood standards. They are interrupted when the woman's husband—Becker's client—walks in on them.*

The program ends with Becker and the woman having another encounter in his office. Putting aside the lack of concern for disease and the immorality, to regularly portray a lawyer behaving in such fashion is an affront to the great majority of those in the law profession who consider sleeping with a client's wife (especially in a divorce case), at the least, unethical.

Advertisers included:

Chrm. James E. Olson, **American Telephone & Telegraph Company**, 550 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022, A T & T phone services.

Pres. John A. Murphy, **Philip Morris**, Incorporated, 120 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017, General Foods International Coffees, General Foods food products, Jell-O desserts, Miller beer.

J&J, Sterling, NBC special ridicule minister

A bizarre scene involving a Christian minister opened the January 5, REMINGTON STEELE two-hour NBC special. Brad Kern wrote the episode and Kevin Inch directed.

The setting was a church where a marriage ceremony was underway. As the bride and groom prepared to exchange vows the minister/character was transformed from a sincere, legitimate minister to a scowling, cigar-smoking imposter. The minister says, "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join in holy matrimony these two..."

Here the pastor's identity changes. The imposter continues the ceremony, yelling at the bride, "...frauds. This whole thing stinks, Holt!"

As mentioned the scene was quite bizarre, but it was another case in which the program's villain is disguised as a Christian minister.

Among the advertisers were:

Chrm. J.E. Burke, **Johnson & Johnson**, One Johnson & Johnson Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08933, ACT dental rinse-mouthwash, Johnson's baby products, Micatin foot spray, Sine-Aid sinus medication, Tylenol pain medicine.

Chrm. John M. Pietruski, **Sterling Drug, Inc.**, 90 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016, Bayer aspirin, Campho-Phenique medication, Lysol disinfectant, Neo-Synephrine decongestant, Phillips Milk of Magnesia.

Priests belittled on ABC's 'A-Team'

Two fall episodes of THE A-TEAM on ABC belittled the priesthood, one subtly, the other quite openly. The September 19 episode featured the A Team helping small service station owners defend their property and business against a big gas company which was trying to intimidate the little men into selling.

One of the A-Team members posed as a priest, puffing smoke unceremoniously out of the confessional. Thomas Szollosi and Richard Christian Matheson wrote the story and Michael O'Herlihy directed.

The October 10 episode featured one A-Team member stealing a priest's robe after knocking him out and tying him up in the bathroom. A friend of the A-Team also used the priest disguise to help infiltrate a prison where other team members were held. Frank Lupo wrote and O'Herlihy directed the episode.

Advertisers on the September 19 episode included:

Chrm. Fred Turner, **McDonald's Corporation**, One McDonald's Plaza, Oak Brook, IL 60521, McDonald's fast food.

Pres. William Wrigley, **Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company**, 410 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611, Big Red gum, Doublemint chewing gum, Freedent gum, Hubba Bubba gum, Juicy Fruit chewing gum, Wrigley's chewing gum.

Among the October 10 advertisers were:

Chrm. L.A. Iacocca, **Chrysler Corporation**, Post Office Box 1919, Detroit, MI 48288, Chrysler automobiles, Dodge motor vehicles, Plymouth automobiles.

Pres. William Wrigley, **Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company**, 410 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611, Big Red gum, Doublemint chewing gum, Extra sugar-free gum, Hubba Bubba gum, Juicy Fruit chewing gum.

Sexual perversion is mainstay on NBC's Night Court

The January 8 episode of NBC's NIGHT COURT was typical of the off-color humor presented almost weekly on that particular program.

At the beginning of the show a man is brought before the judge having been charged with assault. It turns out the man hit a postman after he mis-delivered a package that was supposed to go to the sperm bank. A worker from the sperm bank enters the court room and interrupts. After the judge gives his penalty, the woman from the sperm bank asks Dan Fielding, the program's sex pervert, if he would like to contribute to the bank.

The show continues with Dan (having cooperated with the woman) entering the courtroom and complaining because his contibution has been rejected. The woman replies, mocking the words of Christ: "Many are called, but few are frozen."

The woman then tells Dan, who is unmarried, that in order for his sperm to be acceptable he must abstain from sex for two weeks. His fellow workers place bets that he cannot.