

Air Date

1991 - Tuesdays - Ginny - sometimes - Airwaves

↳ Prime Time  
3rd Season  
(N-1 p/b/s)



New York Post

+ Washington Post

1992 Reviews of THE 90's

"You would be hard pressed to find a TV critic who has not raved about THE 90's."

LOS ANGELES TIMES  
January 19, 1992

"A superb, stunning series... If you haven't seen THE 90's, no amount of explanation here will adequately describe it."

Gordon Walek, DAILY HERALD  
January 28, 1992

"Forget Atlanta, Chicago is now the underground news capital of the U.S... THE 90's is as close to a real people's network as we're ever likely to see."

Michael Dare, BILLBOARD  
February 8, 1992

"Probably the most successful of the new shows utilizing the latest in revolutionary video technology."

CAMCORDER MAGAZINE  
February, 1992

"THE 90's is a feast not only for the eyes but for the mind."

Rick Kogan, CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
January 28, 1992

"THE 90's is the liveliest thing on national television."

NEW AGE JOURNAL  
January, 1992



+ New York Times  
1991

+ Milwaukee Sentinel - 1991

+ Airwaves

It is written...

"THE 90's happens to be the best show on TV."

Richard Nilsen, **THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC**

"Easily the most important and innovative news show on the air, a show that does all the things television was born to do but never does."

Michael Dare, **BILLBOARD**

"THE 90's may be just what the '90s need."

Tom Shales, **THE WASHINGTON POST**

"THE 90's is TV as guerrilla theater, as investigative journalism, as video democracy."

David Bianculli, **NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO**

"Boundaries are being pushed on THE 90's, and your expectations of television's possibilities are being pleasantly, enlighteningly shattered."

Rick Kogan, **CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

"A 'Sesame Street' for all ages."

Amy Taubin, **THE VILLAGE VOICE**

"THE 90's is a bizarre, yet compelling look at people, places, and ideas from around the world. It's a televised mirror of our world... Watch it and see the shape of TV news to come."

James F. Mills, **NORTH CAROLINA AIRWAVES**

"THE 90's series drops bombs of reality on war-proud Americans."

Gordon Walek, **DAILY HERALD**

"A magazine series like no other on TV... It's closer to TV by the people, for the people, than anything you've ever seen this side of obscure cable-access channels."

Noel Holston, **MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE**

"THE 90's pushes the limit of avant-garde TV fare."

Robert Feder, **CHICAGO SUN-TIMES**

"It's well worth a look. Even better, it's worth a thought."

Phil Rosenthal, **L.A. DAILY NEWS**

"Think of it as a refreshing dose of television anarchy."

Joanne Ostrow, **THE DENVER POST**

11pm → primetime in 1991

→ Milwaukee Sentinel

The Weekly News of N



### Planned without target dates

On *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, commentators David Gergen and Mark Shields offer weekly analysis of the campaign. Roger Mudd provides periodic stories about media campaign coverage and candidates' advertising.

■ *The '90s* provides three to five hour-long programs on the campaigns and the voters.

■ *Firing Line* produces two debate specials and cover the campaign in its ongoing series.

■ *Edge* produces segments through May on political advertising and other election-related topics.

■ PBS feeds one or more specials on ethnic minorities' issues in the '92 election. (Producers have not yet been chosen.)

### Early 1992

KPBS, San Diego, produces two-hour discussion with campaign managers of major candidates, hosted by NBC's John Chancellor.

### Spring

*Frontline* presents three-part documentary, "The State of the Democracy," (working title), hosted by William Greider and produced by Sherry Jones. (The series, based on a forthcoming book by former *Washington Post* writer Greider, will deal with Washington realities and special interests' corruption of the democratic process, according to Arnold Labaton of PBS.)

Tenative: *Frontline* provides programs on the Resolution Trust Corp., the Rev. Moon's political influence, the Persian Gulf War and the Iraqi Kurds, the Japan lobby, Fidel Castro, the 1980 hostage crisis and the 1980 election, and the Middle East peace process.

### April

Bill Moyers begins a series of hour-long *Listening to America* programs, covering issues related and unrelated to the campaign.

■ WGBH, Boston, produces a two-hour town-meeting "American Health Care Forum" on the nation's hard choices in health care.

### Spring or summer

*MacNeil/Lehrer's* Judy Woodruff begins a series of candidate profiles of 20 to 30 minutes each.

### July 13-16

PBS carries Democratic National Convention coverage from New York, produced by *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* team, with resources of NBC News. PBS coverage continues from 8 to 11 p.m., but uses NBC personnel only until 9:30 or 10 when NBC begins coverage. (Whether PBS carries the convention coverage will depend on raising about \$1 million, says Labaton.)

### Aug. 17-20

Republican National Convention coverage from Houston, produced by the *MacNeil/Lehrer* team, with resources of NBC News.

■ After the conventions, *MacNeil/Lehrer* seeks 45-minute interviews with party nominees.

### Early September

*MacNeil/Lehrer* begins covering candidates' stump speeches and presenting issue-debate packages of 20-30 minutes at least once a week, summarizing candidates' positions, with debate by representatives of both camps.

■ WETA, Washington, produces a special on citizen responsibility in democracy for the Public Television Outreach Alliance. (Richard Richter of WETA says the special, still in the conceptual stage, will aim at adults and youths ages 16 to 16.)

■ PBS feeds a prime-time Back to School Week special on educational issues in the 1992 campaign.

■ PBS provides schools with a live, interactive distance-learning special for classroom use, complementing the prime-time Back to School Week special.

### Sept. 15, Sept. 30, Oct. 8, Oct. 19

ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN hold candidate debates, with feeds available to other broadcasters. (The plan was proposed last month without consulting public TV. Dates are tentative and parties have not yet accepted the proposal. The networks propose a new format with direct exchanges between major-party candidates. Debates would be broadcast from New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Los Angeles, respectively.)

### October

*Frontline* presents a 90-minute or two-hour 1992 edition of "The Choice"—biographies of the major nominees.

■ *The American Experience* opens its fall season with a four-hour miniseries on the Kennedys. Possible: PBS follows it by repeating earlier miniseries on Presidents Nixon and Johnson.

### Election alert

■ of campaign programs, most recently with a new weekly Bill Moyers series that starts next April. Other elements being planned include three to five election-related programs from *The '90s*, specials on education, health and minority issues, and an outreach special on citizen responsibility.

But the biggest hunk of money available for campaign coverage—the hunk that got away—has gone to Cable News Network instead of PBS. The Markle Foundation and CNN announced plans last week for a \$3.5 million package of programs to be paid for by Markle.

Moyers' new 27-part series of hour-long programs, *Listening to America with Bill Moyers*, got a \$1 million assist from the CPB/PBS Program Challenge Fund this month.

The Moyers series will be made by four teams of producers, each doing one program a month. Formats will include conversations, guest columnists, town meetings and original reporting.

The series will deal with such questions as, why Americans hate politics, what's happening to the economy, and why our democratic system isn't working.

The CPB/PBS million will supplement \$1.25 million from the Mutual of American Life Insurance Co., \$1.25 million from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund and other funds yet to be raised, according to Moyers' company, Public Affairs Television.

Arnold Labaton, director of the PBS election initiative, will provide an update on plans for the Moyers series and other campaign coverage Oct. 24 during a satellite videoconference for stations.

Specials from "The '90s"

For the fourth season of *The '90s*, PBS will lay out \$350,000 toward a series of at least nine hour-long programs to be fed starting Jan. 24. The series of independently produced programs may expand to as many as 11 episodes with a cost of \$1.1 million, says Executive Producer Tom Weinberg.

Independent producers working with the series are already on the road, recording footage with presidential candidates, but Weinberg says the series offers an opportunity to bring in citizens whose views "don't ordinarily get national television exposure."

Besides the three, four or five election-oriented specials, the series will include programs with working titles such as "Talking Chances," "Getting Older," "Guns and Violence," "Rural American/Country Living" and "It's a Mail, Mail World."

*The '90s* is produced by the Fund for Innovative TV in Chicago and presented by KBDJ, Denver, and WTTW, Chicago.

In addition, PBS is planning a campaign-related program on ethnic-minority issues next year and another on education

the network's Executive Committee Oct. 11.

The Back to School Week special will be supplemented by a live interactive special for classroom use. PBS education chief Sandra Welch told the committee.

Top programmer Lawson said PBS had not been consulted by the commercial networks and CNN before they proposed last month a series of four presidential candidate debates next September and October.

She noted that Harvard University's Joan Shorenstein Barone Center for Press, Politics and Public Policy had also proposed a series of candidate debates, also on Sundays, and PBS would cooperate in producing a share of those debate programs.

"If there are debates, we will cover them and would like to participate in them," Labaton told *Current*. "It's still early to know which debate formats and sponsorships will be accepted by the candidates and media outlets."

A new "election channel"

Exactly what CNN will do with the aid from the Markle Foundation was not immediately clear, as might be expected a year before the election.

Turner Educational Services Inc. will provide the programs and curriculum support materials to schools at no charge, according to the CNN release.

CNN President Tom Johnson said the news network will expand its "issues coverage and programming aimed at encouraging citizen participation."

Markle Foundation President Lloyd Morrisett predicted in the release that CNN would become "campaign headquarters—the election channel—for the American voter in 1992."

That's what Morrisett was saying about PBS a year ago, when his foundation and public TV were planning a much larger joint election project with \$3 million from Markle, \$3 million from PBS and CPB, and additional millions that never came through. But the deal fell through in June (*Current*, July 22) and Morrisett took the Markle money elsewhere.

CNN said it has begun developing programs that may include "People's Agenda" reports on citizens' view of the issues, and reports analyzing the campaign process today and yesterday, modern political leadership, and citizen participation in democracy.

The list also includes innovative off-air projects similar to those the foundation wanted public TV to undertake: experimental citizen-involvement projects including focus groups, "innovations in survey research," alternative formats for candidate debates, 800-number phone services and "where feasible" uses of interactive media technology.

—S.B.

## PBS, CPB announce PTV program grants

Programs on contemporary issues of faith, on North America's historical trails and on the Pueblo Indians' 450-year coexistence with Euro-Americans have received funding for distribution through PBS.

■ The CPB/PBS Challenge Fund will provide \$150,000 toward a seven-part series, *Questions of Faith: A Spiritual Guide to the 21st Century*, to be broadcast Oct. 11.

how you come across them and how people send them in and whatever. JOEL COHEN: Well, we have a core group of what we call video correspondents, which is six or seven people who go out and are basically on call to what we want them to go out and shoot, or if they hear about something they can go out and shoot. We just pretty much know that they're out there shooting for us.

We also get a lot of tapes from the independent community, just word of mouth, people hearing about the show, or they've seen the show, and tapes are sent in, probably about 30 a week I'd say.

And we do pay. We pay them \$100 a minute -- \$125 a minute, I guess, for every minute that's aired, though we do excerpt from long things, so they only get paid for what is on.

can Trails, a multipart series in planning at WGBH, Boston.

■ PBS separately has given \$83,000 toward a two-hour special, "Surviving Columbus," to be made by Native American producers. The program will be co-produced by KINME-TV, Albuquerque, N.M., and the Institute of American Indian Arts and Alaska Native Culture and Arts De-



# VIEWER MAIL AND FAXES (1989-1992)

"I found THE 90'S to be an excellent mixture of vital issues and sublime silliness...keep up the good work!"

- Kansas City, MO

"It helps to know other folks find this a crazy era in our history, and can express it so the rest of us can relate."

- Blaine, MN

"It's great to see some truth on TV that isn't just there because it slipped through some crack."

- Terre Haute, IN

"Glad to know this form of documentary is alive and well...even in the Bible Belt!"

- Pittsburg, KS

"In a land with such biased news and media coverage, THE 90'S is great!"

- Sherwood, OR

"This is news and information as it was meant to be...free press on television is rare, and harder to find every day."

- Denver, CO

"We are very fortunate, as a nation, to have an entity such as yours. That is willing to expose some of the issues of this current period."

- Coraopolis, PA

"Thank you for opening my eyes..."

- Tempe, AZ

"...very informative, enlightening and a ray of hope to people."

- Royse City, TX

"THE 90'S is the most delightful example of journalistic eclecticism I have ever seen."

- Clarence, NY

"(It's) terrific to have...an alternative to 20/20 -- more relaxed and humorous, able to afford risk-taking..."

- Union City, NJ

"What I find particularly intriguing is your combination of informative reporting and cinema verité...your work is important, impressive, and may well be the foundation for the advancement of television."

- Apache Junction, AZ

"It's realism, it's more razorlike than avant-garde, it's a chunk of freedom in the new age of paranoia..."

- Waterloo, IA

# It's time

## Hit PBS show

## now out on tape

VIDEO SCAN

By Lynn Voedisch

The year 1991 has been good to "The '90s the Public Broadcasting System televis program produced by Chicagoan T Veinberg. Not only is the show a hit on put elevision, but it is going great guns on ho ideo, too.

All programs from the third season of 1 rogram of offbeat movies and homemade vide re now available on video. Available titles a Money, Money, Money" (No. 301), "It's O v" (No. 302), "Bar Talk" (No. 303), "Fro No. 304), "World's Eye View of the USA" (N 05), "Race and Racism" (No. 305), "Kids a earning" (No. 307), "The Street" (No. 30 War" (No. 309) and "Prisons and Their Co ents" (No. 310).

Also available are videos from the earlier t easons. Titles are "Best of the '90s, Vol. 1" an The '90s Hemp Video" (a look at all the oth ses for marijuana). There also is "The Gr rists TV Special," a two-hour program pr uced by Paper Tiger, a community televisic eries, and Deep Dish TV, the first public-ace atellite program. It's a documentary of how ti ni-war movement reacted to the war in ti diddle East—a viewpoint that was overlooke n mainstream television.

All "90s" videotapes are available in VH nly and cost \$19.95 each, except the Gulf Cris ape, which costs \$24.95. Tapes can be ordere



# 'The 90's' is ahead of its time

Here's what I can't figure out.

If this is 1991, how can the PBS series "The 90's" be in its third season?

Such unresolved contradictions are neither unusual to the decade or the program.

In fact, "The 90's" traffics in contradictions. After two years and 33 thirty-minute episodes syndicated to 160 public stations nationwide — including Milwaukee — the frenetic, kinetic collage joins the national

PBS lineup Tuesday. Fluid in content and form, it defies categorization and may be the most challenging program on TV.

A joint production of public television stations in Denver and Chicago it is a potpourri of video verite, ambush journalism, man-on-the-street interviews, music and global politics.

The season premiere is ostensibly about money, including a trip to where the money is printed and a visit inside a bank vault "It's a TV show," says a cooperative banker to an associate with the vault key. "They want to see where the money is." The same man admits to playing Monopoly inside the vault with real money.

Also included, a visit with a peace group poised between two armies in the Persian Gulf, an impassioned speech from an Indian activist, an eco-rage rant and "the first music video from Mozambique," a pop song by Elvira Viegas.

Although newsmagazine is one way to describe "The 90's," the phrase is woefully inadequate. Without traditional "bumpers" or logos and without narrator or host, one segment bumps against the next — there are 10 to 20 in each 60 minute episode — like billiard balls, either continuing the momentum or branching off in a new direction. If this were radio you'd think you were listening / watching NPR's "All Things Considered," without the headlines.

"The 90's" is alternative programing in perspective — left of center skeptical — and format. It is a cyclops with a single video monitor smack in the middle of its forehead.

Imagine a massive US military operation intended to unseat a tinhorn despot that also shatters the infrastructure of the small nation that is its target. Iraq? Not this time.

"War and Peace in Panama," Tuesday on PBS' "Frontline," paints a picture of a conflict — nicknamed "Operation Just Cause" — that was a dress rehearsal for Operation Desert Storm.

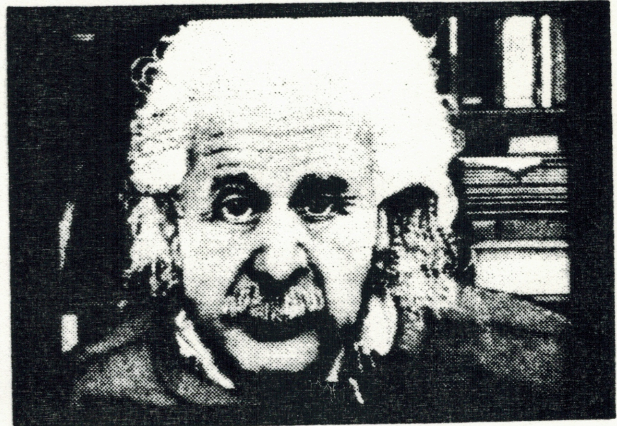
Events and players in the US invasion of Panama in 1989, whose aim was to unseat "maximum leader" Manuel Noriega, foreshadowed US resolve in the gulf. It was Gen. Colin Powell's first outing as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and he was anxious to "go in whole hog."

President Bush encouraged a coup against Noriega but when it was set in motion, the US held back its support. "We didn't go the extra mile to make sure that it happened," says one military

**Duane  
Dudek**



Sentinel TV/radio critic



Now appearing: Albert Einstein (relatively speaking) makes regular appearances on "The 90's."

analyst. The invasion itself ruined thousands of homes and devastated the economy. And once inside Panama we found "we couldn't put together an operation that could grab him."

"Frontline" presents never before seen video footage of the invasion made by US Army cameramen and information from US government documents and interviews with those involved in the invasion. And it offers evidence that Panama remains a refuge for cocaine traffickers.

In simpler times, "love meant never having to say you're sorry."

Today, lovers cannot take enough precautions to prevent a deadly infection for which no apology can be enough. Half of all teenagers have sex, and reported cases of AIDS in teenage girls have jumped 71% over the past year. "First Love, Fatal Love," Tuesday on HBO, could be a classic romance story, if not for its deadly and tragic consequences.

Clearly its tale of an unprotected sexual interlude with a handsome friend at a college campus is the stuff of teenage fantasy. But it's all too true.

The half hour "after-school" type drama is based on the true story of Kim Frey, a typical suburban teen, whose comments open and close the drama. "Michael gave me love, he made me laugh and was a wonderful friend," says Frey of her encounter. "If I had followed the advice I'm give you now, I wouldn't be infected with the AIDS virus."

Short takes: You can throw money at your problems. WISN-TV (Channel 12) has defused the WTMJ-TV (Channel 4) talk show powerhouse "The Oprah Winfrey Show" as a competitor by making the program's distributor an offer it couldn't refuse. Winfrey puts her touchy-feely interview style in a Gucci bag and moves it over to WISN-TV in the fall of 1993. The chat wars also find Geraldo Rivera taking his confrontational act from WISN-TV to WITI-TV (Channel 6) this fall.

Rivera was making any deals on his talk show contingent on his new investigative half hour "Now It Can Be Told." WTMJ-TV will also be home this fall to new talk shows from Chuck Woolery and Jenny Jones, a former comedienne who would not allow men in her audience. WISN-TV has also added Maury Povich's new news-of-the-day oriented half hour show. Among off-network programs entering syndication WISN-TV adds "Perfect Strangers," WITI gets "Murphy Brown," WVTM-TV (Channel 18) enlists "Roseanne" and WCGV-TV (Channel 24) won "Married . . . With Children."