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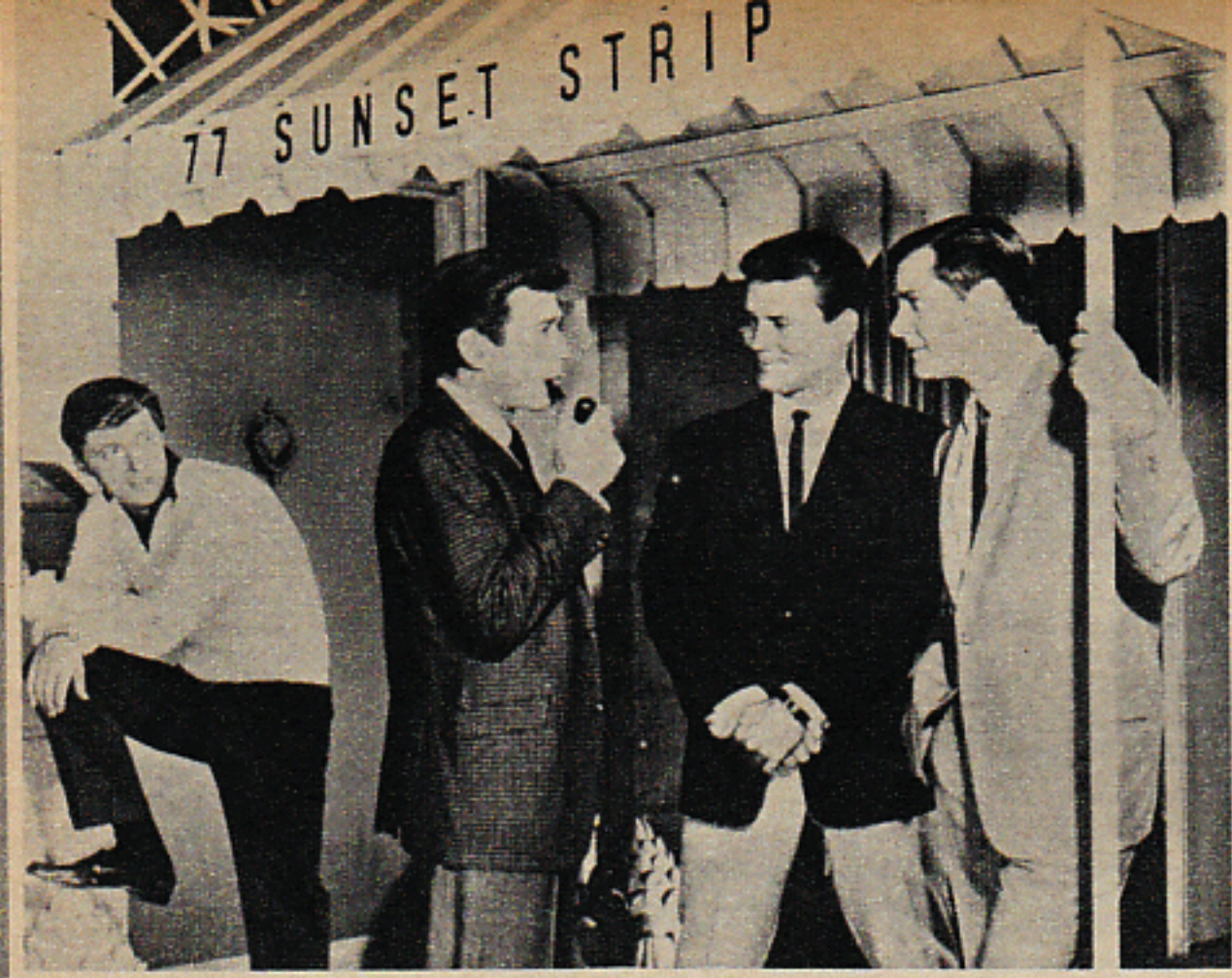
**Return to Peyton Place
—the story in full**

**Don't blame us for
teenage violence,
say TV stars**

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**MAGGIE
PIERCE**



Efrem Zimbalist, here with the "77 Sunset Strip" team, says: "It's ridiculous to blame us"



Arness: "You can't be honest if you ignore violence"

At last the TV stars speak out...

Don't blame us 'teenage

THE other evening I turned on my TV set. The inevitable Western was showing.

As my picture faded in I saw the stark horror of a man being hung by a bunch of outlaws. The rope was tossed up to a branch. The victim's head was placed in the noose. Then, as his body swung to and fro, a babble of laughter rang out from the lynching mob.

Feeling slightly sick I turned to the other channel and was immediately thrown into the middle of a gun fight between a gangster and a detective.

Crime and violence are commodities which are selling too many of today's top TV shows. Already the public has protested against the violent scenes they and their children are being subjected to night after night.

Is this ENTERTAINMENT?

National crime figures are continually rising, particularly among juvenile offenders.

Inevitably the question is raised: IS TV TO BLAME?

The possibilities cannot and must not be dismissed. Television has tremendous power. This is proved by the millions of pounds spent

each year by advertisers wanting to sell their products to the public.

If a brand of soap can be sold, so too can crime!

"Violence on television has gone about as far as it can," said Donald Gray, who stars in the private detective series "Mark Saber."

"The other evening I switched on and watched a Western called 'The Outlaws' and never have I seen such violence.

"There were no reasons, no morals, absolutely nothing to justify the dead bodies cluttering up the screen.

"I'm all for a little drama and violence here and there to emphasise a point in the drama. After all, we all like to watch a good fist fight. But when there is no justification for violence, I am dead against it."

Gray discussed his own show "Mark Saber."

"It isn't what I would describe as a violent series. I'm glad about that—because I detest violence. I was even glad when it was decided to put the show on at 11 o'clock at night, so that youngsters would not be subjected to viewing what little violence there was.

"Even at this late hour children watch the show. I know by my fan letters. Parents have

written and told me how much their youngsters enjoy it. In this respect it is the parents who are partly to blame."

I asked Gray if he considered violence on television the cause of some juvenile crimes today.

"Whether or not you can blame TV is difficult for me to say, but there is no question that youngsters do get some of their ideas from shows. Of course, something should be done. But what?

More Control Needed

"I think the planners should exercise more control in the production of these violent programmes and I think the contracting companies should have their own panel of censors. It is a pity that TV films aren't subjected to the same stiff censorship that applies to the film industry."

Is the artist ever to blame?

Gray chuckled. "No, I don't think it is fair to blame the artist. After all, we are told what to do according to the script and the director, though on one or two occasions I have objected to some scenes in 'Saber.' In one episode the climax called for a shooting. In an earlier



Wyler: "Violence that excites sadistic interest is wrong in any medium"



Horton: "How can you tell a story about a violent period in history without violence?"

for violence

scene we'd already had a suicide attempt when one of the characters tried to gas himself. I had a talk with the director and asked him if he thought this shooting climax was really necessary. He said it was, so there was nothing I could do about it."

Robert Horton, star of TV's "Wagon Train" did not think television was to blame for juvenile crime.

Horton said: "Certainly the crime rate is up all over the world. But not because of television. Crime has increased because of the rapid rise in population. The kids who become delinquents don't get their ideas from watching TV shows, but the so-called experts must have a scapegoat, and TV is the handiest thing around."

"Our series is frequently criticised for its display of violence. Well, how can you tell a dramatic story about a violent period in history without violence? The critics say there are too many dead bodies in 'Wagon Train.' If I'm going to be on next week's show there must be dead bodies. In the period of history we are dealing with it was kill or be killed. Anyone who studies history knows that."

James Arness, TV's Marshal Matt Dillon of the highly successful "Gun Law," agreed with Horton.

"Of course," he said, "you must have violence. You can't expect Marshal Dillon to go around eating cream puffs! Life is full of violence. How can you be honest if you ignore it?"

Efrem Zimbalist Jr., of "77 Sunset Strip," jumped to the defence of the private detective shows. Zimbalist said: "Why blame detective shows for the increase in crime? It is ridiculous to blame us for causing delinquency. Why, detective stories have been popular for years. I don't see why they should lead kids on to a life of crime."

I next spoke to Patrick McGoohan, TV's "Danger Man."

What were his opinions?

"The blame for the rise in juvenile delinquency is due to the post-war times we have lived in. I know there has been quite an outcry against TV violence, but I would hate to see any form of censorship."

"When we started 'Danger Man'—which was also shot for the U.S. market—the Americans were keen on violence, so the original

By KEN FERGUSON



McGoohan: "I don't think I have ever seen anything on TV that I would not permit my children to watch"

character of John Drake was that of a tough gun-happy fellow.

"Later on I opposed this conception. We knew that the show was put on at an hour when a lot of youngsters would be watching so we had a meeting to discuss what might be done. We cleaned up the character in such a way that a minimum of violence was shown. And as we progressed 'Danger Man,' I think, became a better show."

"I don't think I have ever seen anything on TV that I would not permit my children to watch, but then I don't watch a lot of TV. If there is anything I object to it would be contemplated violence—you know, when a fellow holding a knife stands facing you for five minutes threatening to cut your throat."

"Violence that excites (Continued on page 57)

Don't blame us for teenage violence

(Continued from page 11)

a sadistic interest in an audience is wrong for any medium," says Richard Wyler, the rain-coated hero of "Man From Interpol."

"I wouldn't say that our series, in particular, has been guilty of too much violence—in fact often it's been too tame. There is nothing wrong in watching a good fist fight. After all, kids have been watching them for years in 'U' certificate Westerns.

"But what goes into a fight scene, and how it is put across on the screen, is a different matter. Some directors go too far. For instance, I find it unnecessary to show a close-up shot of a guy treading on another guy's fingers in a fight scene. There is no need to shoot this at all.

"There are a few television programmes, too, that glamorise tragedy, which is a sad thing. 'Probation Officer' was an offender the other evening. A young girl had got herself into trouble. She was pregnant. Her boy friend had married another girl and the girl in trouble obviously had problems until she met the probation officer. He was portrayed as a marvellous guy and the girl began to feel she

was getting more interest and affection from him than anyone else.

"Now any young girl watching this might get funny ideas. She might feel—whatever happens the probation officer will take care of me. Now this is bad for impressionable kids, and to my mind more harmful than watching two guys beating each other up."

Summing up, I would agree with Donald Gray when he presses for some form of TV censorship.

But, on the other hand, the demand for violence on television obviously comes from the public itself—otherwise people wouldn't turn on these Westerns and private detective shows.

Recently, thirty-two-year-old Stuart Douglas, a playwright, hit out against the low standards of television writing and the many mediocre shows.

Douglas said: "Writers are tottering about in a dream world of international detectives and Teddy Boys. This leads to mediocrity, sadism and horror. But what can a writer do? He does not eat if he does not follow the pattern."



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