WELCOME TO THE REVOLUTION

1970s
“Marcia wants to nominate her new Dad as Father of the Year.” (The Brady Bunch Jan 2 1970 ABC)

“Steve Douglas gets cast in daughter Dodie's school play as a tree.” (My Three Sons Jan 3 1970 CBS)

“Lassie is struck by a car while saving a child and now appears to have amnesia.” (Lassie Jan 4 1970 CBS)

“A circus midget and new widower struggle to deal with the prejudice of the town’s banker.” (Bonanza Jan 4 1970 NBC)

“Julie is held hostage by a disturbed man who mistakes her for the daughter of a woman he wants to punish for insulting him.” (The Mod Squad Jan 6 1970 ABC)
• “Billie researches an article on the suicide of teenagers.” (Lou Grant Dec 24 1979 CBS)
• “Barney assigns a female detective to investigate a dentist who has a history of sexually assaulting sedated patients.” (Barney Miller Dec 27 1979 ABC)
• Danny and Polly continue to grapple with their inter-racial romance; Chester begs wife Jessica for another chance after she discovers his infidelity; high-school senior Billy is thrown an 18th birthday by the teacher he is sleeping with.” (Soap Dec 27 1979 ABC)
TELEVISION
(...or whatever that is anymore)

Think of all the ways you watch content right now. How much of it is not even on a television set?

How did we get from there to here?
FROM HERE... TO HERE?
TO THIS...

...FROM THAT?

Schitt's Creek

"I Love Lucy"
FROM THIS...
AND THIS

• AND THIS
AND THIS?
TO THIS?
MOSTLY BECAUSE WE’VE GONE FROM THIS ...
AND THIS....
...TO THIS
MUCH OF THE CHANGE IN CONTENT IF NOT TECHNOLOGY IS DUE TO WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 1970S,

When...

- ... the TV business came into the hands of the first generation raised on it
- ... black-and-white (of everything) took on shades of gray
- ... norms and standards and expectations came out of the 60s changed forever
- ... taboo subjects and material was no longer taboo
- ... prime-time TV could no longer exist in a Brady Bunch vacuum
- ... everyday reality could no longer be ignored
The missing link...

...between then and now
“...A fact or piece of information that you need in order to have complete knowledge of something...”
THE COURSE

All in the Decade:
70 Things About 70s TV That Turned a Ten Years in a Revolution
OF COURSE...
Born and raised in Philadelphia, with a Journalism degree from the city’s Temple University, which took me to Los Angeles ... eventually.
Sons Named in Double Slaying in Beverly Hills

Crime: One arrested. Entertainment chief Menendez and wife were initially thought victims of a gangland hit.

Ronald L. Sobie and John Johnson Staff Writers

The eldest son of slain entertainment executive Jose Menendez and his wife was arrested Thursday on suspicion of murdering his parents.

"I've been in this business over 33 years and I have heard of very few murders that were more savage than this one was," Beverly Hills Police Chief Marvin D. Isenbarg said at a news conference.

As for the motive, Isenbarg said..."
“AUTHOR’S NOTE...”

“The 1970s, after all, was the decade that made everything that was being enjoyed in 2014 possible – the content, the daring, the technology, the choice, the experience. The TV industry came of age in the 1970s. It entered the decade as an awkward adolescent and emerged ten years later a (reasonably) confident adult.”

...which is what this course is about: that coming of age...
But it’s also about fun and about nostalgia and about remembering.
But first...
AN OBVIOUS DISCLAIMER

EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT TV

JIM’S CLASS
TV EVOLUTION IN A NUTSHELL

• has gone from something you listen to to something you watch for
• has gone from a shared experience to a singular one
• has gone from obvious material to nuanced (both humor and drama)
• has gone from flat to multi-dimensional
• has gone from black-and-white to color in possible every sense
• has gone from passive viewing to active experience (and interaction)
• conceived in the 1920s and announced in the 1930s
• born in the 1940s
• a toddler in the 1950s
• a young child in the 1960s
• a rebellious adolescent in the 1970s
• an adult as of the 1980s
• an adult with a mid-life crisis as of the 2000s
FROM RADIO TO TV

**Candid Microphone**
*Two Episodes*
*1947*

**I Love Lucy**

**Gunsmoke**

**The Lone Ranger**

**The Guiding Light**

**The Life of Riley**

**The Jack Benny Show**

**Our Miss Brooks**

**Adventures of Superman**

**The Burns and Allen Show**

**The Amos 'n Andy Show**

**The Life of Riley**

**Dragnet**
As a brand-new medium, as an unknown thing, television was rooted in the known – in proven and accepted and popular stage entertainment of vaudeville and then radio.

The writing is:
• broad
• safe
• familiar
• black-and-white in every sense
• “radio with pictures”
In three words...

NOT.

VERY.

CHALLENGING.

(to networks, to advertisers, to viewers)
The number of households with a television set increased from a mere 9.8 million in 1941 to 45 million by 1959.
TV in the ‘50s a Forgettable Period for Blacks

An “intentionally skewed version of reality ... quite literally, a whitewash”
"Television was the place where one found definitively normal families," says Television in Black-and-White America: Race and National Identity, "and no black children were to be found in that excessively normal world."
But times and ideas and writing and approaches were beginning to change in the latter part of the decade as TV audiences grew...
Having toddled in the 1950s, TV learns to walk and to explore (and to challenge) in the 1960s...

Prime-time is now a mix of the old and new

Writers were beginning to trust audiences to handle / accept more

TV is beginning to experiment, to think less broadly
It’s still this...
... but now it’s this, too
THE GROWTH COMES IN OBVIOUS AND NOT SO OBVIOUS WAYS

• OPENING CREDITS
• MUSIC
• MULTI-GENERATIONAL
• CONTEMPORARY SITUATIONS
• URBAN LOCATIONS
AS THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY IS CHANGING IN THE COUNTRY, SO, TOO, IS IT ON TV
MORE AND MORE WOMEN BEHIND THE SCENES ... ... Especially as writers, giving a more rounded perspective on people and situations

Ruth Brooks Flippen
Peggy Elliot
Helen Levitt
Lila Garrett
Barbara Avedon
BLACK IMAGES AND IDEAS AND VOICES, TOO,

Ferdinand Leon
Harry Dolan
Gene Boland
Robert Goodwin (one of the first blacks to write for national television)

DIFFERENCES ARE BEING MADE, BUT ...
A ("SANITIZED") MILESTONE

• ...”However, using that middle-class premise for the first comedy to showcase a black family in 1968 turned "Julia" into a battlefield in the still-ongoing war about how African-Americans are represented on TV today. Squarely situated at an intersection between popular culture and racial politics, "Julia" became a beachhead for critics who insisted that television should not sacrifice African-American authenticity to win viewers....”
THE EXPERIENCE AS THE 1960S COMES TO AN END

• TV comes out of the "theater" (studio) – location filming
• opening credits less "vaudeville/stage" presentation overtures, they tell a story and are part of the store
• realistic set design
• nods to current times (pop music)
• something for (most) ever viewer
THE DRUMS OF REAL CHANGE BEGIN TO BEAT IN 1967
KEY YEAR: 1969

- My World... and Welcome to It
- Room 222
- The Courtship of Eddie's Father
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfaQhiGPV4Y

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MLkofLSYZs

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAIEIMxfxBc
MORE AND MORE CHANGES IN MATERIAL, PRESENTATION, FACES, SITUATIONS

• from something you listen to > something you take in with your eyes

• from broad > nuance

• from “typing > writing”
MEANWHILE ....

• Vietnam on the Evening News
• “The while world is watching” (1968 Democratic)
• MLK and RFK killed
• Campus protest
• The moon landing
• Charles Manson
• Stonewall Uprising
GIVEN ALL THIS ....

HOW COULD PRIME-TIME TV

NOT

CHANGE

?
(And as it happens so happens, over in the ABC Comedy Development department...)
THE REVOLUTION HAD BEGUN
END OF WEEK 1

WEEK 2: REALISM
(no class session next week; see you on January 25th)

WHEN THE FACES AND VOICES AND THE STORIES ON SCREEN BEGAN TO RESEMBLE THE FACES AND VOICES AND STORIES IN LIFE (feel free to think ahead of examples and we’ll see if ours match)