

# Ch. 21 Special: How Dr. Who Begat Dr. Who

**T**HERE'S A NEW "Doctor Who" special Sunday night on Ch. 21 you Time Lords out there should know about. It's such a high bombardment of positive ions, definitely worth parking your Tardis for.

I'm talking about the "Doctor Who Regeneration Special," 3½ hours of pure television science and history. Five episodes on WLIW, starting at 7 p.m., which link together the changes in appearance and personalities of the five Doctors who have replaced the original "the doctor" in the 21 years of the BBC hit science-fiction series.

Not since "The Five Doctor Whos Special" of 1985, the famous "Doctor Who Quintet," or "The Whooooos" has there been a comparable event in Whovian programming.

Who or what is a Whovian? Whovians is what the fans call themselves. Don't ask me why. Ask George Bernard Shaw fans who are Shavians.

The amazing *tour de Who* opens at 7 p.m. with "The War Games," Part 10 (Patrick Troughton's last episode). At 7:30, it's "Spearhead from Space," Part 1 (Jon Pertwee's first episode). At 8, "Planet of the Spiders," Part 6 (Pertwee's last episode). At 8:30, "Robot," Part 1 (Tom Baker's first episode). At 9, "Castrovalva," Part 1 (Peter Davidson's first episode). At 9:30, "Caves of Androzani," Part 4 (Davidson's last episode). And at 10, the last but not least, "The Twin Dilemma," Part 1 (Colin Baker, the current doctor's first episode).

Ch. 21 has become sort of a Whoquarters for "Doctor Who" fans, having bought the rights to all six "Doctor Whos," which means programs starring all the doctors.

There hasn't been such a bench strength in "Doctor Whos" since the New Jersey Network (Ch. 50) began showing the Jon Pertwees in February, 1985. Ch. 49 in Connecticut also has had a galaxy of the doctors. Ch. 31 is the latest to join the "Doctor Who" race.

And all the public TV stations are a lot better than WOR/9's idea of programming — to play the same few episodes over and over (from the Tom Baker period) without a twinge of cosmic angst. I'm still not convinced that the licensing problems RKO/General Tire, which owns Ch. 9, had with the FCC weren't caused by a Time Lord getting even for their rerunning the episodes until they got as bald as a retreaded General tire.

The Whovians' power, of course, comes from knowing the magic words that open public TV's

## MARVIN KITMAN SHOW



Executive Producer



Tom Baker, one of the more familiar Dr. Whos.

box of treasures — PLEDGE! They have discovered that money runs public TV's universe. Just pledge a lot around your favorite programs, and you regenerate the program. Money does more than talk in public TV. It shouts.

"Doctor Who" fans are not necessarily rich or extravagant. Oh, they may have a Tardis or two in their backyard (a Tardis, for those who are not from the Planet Gallifrey, is a London Metropolitan Police call box, which the time lords use to steer themselves back into the time frame zones). But Whovians are insanely loyal and dedicated and they know how the system works.

I wouldn't be surprised, in fact, if some day such a high percentage of the members at 21 are Whovians, they will take control of the station, change the call letter to WWHO and program out of a Tardis in the parking lot in Plainview.

"Doctor Who" is a very good show, as I've been writing since discovering the BBC series on Ch. 9. It's an amazing TV program. By that I mean you can't get anything like it in American TV or in movies. It's science-fiction with a kind of lunacy that you have to see. You can't describe it.

I never tire of watching the reruns, hoping to find new hidden meanings in the stories. Is there one that foretells the real life adventures the show had last season, when the BBC forced "Doctor Who" to go "on hiatus" for 18 months, and it was almost lost in the sixth dimension? A polite way of killing the show! "What a bunch of ingrates at the BBC," as Kate Gallagher of Massapequa has observed. "After all, the Doctor has saved Great Britain from Tractators, Cyberman,

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who's who of Hollywood celebrities, will be seen at 9 a.m., beginning Sept. 15. It will replace "Perfect Match." "True Confessions" will be hosted by Bill Bixby and is based on the magazine of the same name.

WCBS also announced that it will broadcast "Business Day," at 6:30 a.m. beginning Sept. 29. The half-hour program, syndicated by Disney Television replaces the "CBS Early Morning News," which is forced to 6 a.m., a less desirable time slot for the network.

The station further announced that Joe Zone, a weekend sportscaster, will be shifted to weekday reporting on amateur and recreational sports for its 5:30 p.m. newscast, which begins Sept. 3. Zone will be replaced on the weekends by Bob Goldsholl, a former sports reporter for WPIX/11 and the Independent Network News. Goldsholl recently substituted for Zone, who was out with a prolonged illness.

—Kevin Goldman

# The Best Thing In 'Adams Apple'

## TV REVIEW

By Leo Seligsohn

**T**HERE'S A LOT of murder in "Adams Apple" (CBS/2, 8-9 tomorrow night) but the only corpse is the show, which starts out healthy and then chokes to death on banality.

The word healthy is used here in the Hitchcock sense only: suspense and horror in the time-honored tradition. It gets a workout when, during the first few minutes, a homicidal rapist stalks his pretty prey, alone in her apartment and getting ready for bed. No dialogue. Just glissandos of goose-pimples music. A glass cutter in a rubber-gloved hand makes a little circle in the apartment window and soon the intruder is reaching through and letting himself in. Terror follows — interrupted when a downstairs neighbor breaks down the door and saves the young woman from almost-certain death. The knife-wielding culprit escapes.

All in all, the psycho prologue is appropriately sickening but done with a certain grand-guignol finesse. Once the opening gruel has been served, however, the show turns into television's three billionth helping of private-eye chopped liver — cute-cute derring-do with a big side order of piquant travelogue. The Big Apple turns out to be the real star — and a good thing, too. Who, after all, gives a rap about the muddled, cliché-riddled story after getting drunk on shots of Rockefeller Center and other photo opportunities along the Manhattan grand-tour route? For those who want more, there's name dropping. SoHo, East Hampton, the Dakota, Gansevoort Street, Yale, Columbia . . . Like that.

Yuppiedom gets lots of attention in the good-guy department. And since the acting is on a high level, the focus has the freshening effect of offering Ivy-League types upholding justice, rooting out evil and serving as fashion plates.

But nice touches can't overcome the staleness of a plot that leads nowhere inhabited by essentially tiresome characters. It's disappointing since, at first, the show signals that it has something special up its sleeve. Immediately after the rape, for example, the cops pick up a suspect. He looks like the rapist and he's dressed like the rapist but he insists he's innocent, even after the victim picks him out of a police lineup and a zealous district attorney gleefully contemplates an easy conviction. Still, it's not a hundred percent certain, despite the similarities, that the menacing rapist we just saw and the stunned-looking Columbia graduate protesting his innocence are really the same person. The show sets up a dilemma by presenting two sharply contrasting aspects of this character.

Is this going to be a story about mistaken identity? Kafkaesque intrigue? Not on your life. Just a device to introduce us to what "Adams Apple" has been dying to explore all along — the big-city life of cute Toni (Sydney Walsh) and her cute lawyer boyfriend, Jeff (John Furey), hired by the accused rapist. When it turns out, without much fanfare, that their client really is the bad guy, there goes the show. All that's left is: Why does Toni, a former assistant district attorney with a Yale pedigree, like to snoop around with a gun? Because she looks good in a trenchcoat? Because one meets such interesting people in the private-eye business? Toni and the rape victim, Bernadette (Polly Draper), get to be real good friends.

Most of the show, however, is taken up with nonsense about why Bernadette was raped and nearly killed in the first place. Obvious. She was the target of finagling furriers for whom she once worked as bookkeeper. She knows too much. The intruder is nothing but a mink-and-stole hit man. The rape? Just one of those things. Why does the bum hire an investigator only to prove himself a liar? And why . . . ? But why go on? "Adams Apple" looks slick but you don't have to bite. /■

## TV SHORTS

**W**CBS/2 will have its viewers in court this fall. The station will air three court-oriented syndicated dramatizations weekdays. At 9:30 a.m., "The Judge," which recreates cases from family court, will replace "Break the Bank," which never made a dent in the ratings. "Divorce Court" will air at 4 p.m., followed by "Superior Court" at 4:30 p.m. The two programs replace reruns of "Quincy."

NBC's "Today" and ABC's "Good Morning America" tied for first place in the Nielsen ratings for the week ending Aug. 15. Each program finished with a 4.3 rating/23 share. "Good Morning America" has beaten the dominant "Today" show in the ratings only twice since last October. The "CBS Morning News" remained in third place with a 2.5 rating/13 share.

"True Confessions," which is described as a

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Daleks, Zygons, Yettis, Androids, the Master and other monsters and disasters."

The villain in the diabolical plot was Michael (Low) Grade, who claimed the doctor needed a rest. It was becoming too violent or something. The "Doctor Who" crowd became violent, worldwide. Grade, the BBC comptroller (or programming chief), has previously studied TV programming on the Planet of Los Angeles with Embassy TV, and is against violence, and for cancellations.

The theme of this season's big "Dr. Who" special Sunday night is regeneration, a technical word meaning when an actor gets tired of a role after three to five years they want a change. The BBC doesn't pay that much. Working for "Doctor Who" is like the dole for successful actors.

*Regeneration* means something else to "the doctors," these men with two hearts and thirteen lives who can go in and out of focus as much as my old TV set. Basically, regeneration means they go into the shop for recharging the battery. This is an oversimplification. Each doctor is regenerated into the man he was, or is, depending upon one's relative dimension in time or space, of course. Watch the five episodes, for more specific details about how it's done.

Regeneration is relevant for non-Whovians, especially those who watch the prime-time soaps. Regeneration is going on all the time, for instance, on "Dynasty," where Fallon was regenerated. The two Fallons (Pamela Sue Martin and Emma Samms) were preceded by the two Steven

Carringtons. And this fall, the two Amandas.

And I won't even mention Miss Ellie who is into her third regeneration on "Dallas." And Boobie Ewing. And now Jock. You don't have to watch public TV to be a scholar of regeneration studies.

The big difference is their attitude to having to change casts midstream. In "Doctor Who" they have a rationale in the story which beautifully explains in a logical way the six different Doctor Whos. In our soaps, they make out like you're dumb. They hope you won't notice the different face.

I don't mind seeing the different Doctor Whos. And are they different. There is one, Ralph Troughton, who looks like Shemp from "The Three Stooges," in his baggy clown costume. One is a wimp (Peter Davidson). One is a James Bond type, and so forth. And they all fit together like facets of a gem. Or as in the case of the sides of Fallon, so far, if you believe in regeneration, a pet rock.

The other good news Sunday night is that at 10:30 p.m. Ch. 21 is playing "Ask Dr. Science," the only quiz show which asks all the things about science you were afraid to know the answers to. Like what does a bug think of before it hits the windshield of the car at 80 mph? Where do missing socks go? And why don't you ever see baby pigeons in the city? National Public Radio's Duck Breath Mystery Theatre *knows*. It's a four giggle show, five if you're an academic, six if a scientist. //■