

Mr. Shatner: Oh, yes, I've written scripts and, in fact, whenever I'm not working as an actor, I try to do something in the area of creating a script. And by that, I mean, I have, in the past, sat down and written shows--either a finished screenplay or a story idea--and in the past three years, I tried to put together a film by either buying a property, a book, or a script that I think can be improved, or by one means or another, putting together a film. I've tried on three separate occasions to have a screenplay in a finished form of such value that somebody would be willing to invest money. I haven't succeeded in three tries, but that won't stop me.

Mr. Nicholson: "Star Trek" and the show you did before that, as well as the one before that, all had pretty good critical reviews. They made points; they had a point of view that they were expressing.

Mr. Shatner: Social commentary.

Mr. Nicholson: Right. This brings the question to my mind: Is this general approval of the point of view reached through discussion with writers and the entire staff, or is it representative of the official decision of just one or two people?

Mr. Shatner: Well, in the case of the series you're talking about before, "For the People," the same group that produced "The Defenders," Herb Brodtkin of Plaudis Productions-- Well, to go back even further--I had been asked to do "The Defenders" and I turned it down, wanting to make a career in theater and movies. Subsequently, some four years later, I changed my mind and Brodtkin called me and said, "We have a show ready to go. We've got a pilot; we're on the waiting period, ready to go on the air, and its point of view will be that of the opposite, the other table, than 'The Defenders.'" In other words, "The Defenders" was defending the criminal against the machinations of the law. This program, "For the People," would be defending the people against the aberrations caused by defence law-

\* yers, so that the people, themselves,  
\* would be protected against the criminals,  
\* in order to prosecute the criminals, put  
\* the criminals away. And I, at this point,  
\* had kind of adhered to that point of view  
\* anyway, you know. I mean, much had been  
\* written about the defense of the individ-  
\* ual and the pendulum has just begun to  
\* swing back the other way and say, "Wait a  
\* minute! It's all very well to say his  
\* mother didn't like him and that's why he  
\* murdered that person, but what about that  
\* murdered person and his family?" which is  
\* the other point of view.

\* So I selected to do the show for a  
\* number of reasons and one of them being  
\* that the point of view did not offend  
\* me. On "Star Trek," we take a very  
\* humanistic point of view and that's part  
\* of my philosophy as well. If I encountered  
\* a situation whereby a script offended me  
\* and I was tied by contract with the neces-  
\* sity of doing it, uh....I think at this  
\* point now, I would object. Whether I  
\* would have when I was in a less "strong"  
\* position, I don't know. (small laugh)

\* Karen: Have you ever changed the dialogue  
\* in a script that you didn't think went  
\* with the character?

\* Mr. Shatner: Oh, yes! These scripts are  
\* written so hastily! The author of a par-  
\* ticular script will conceive an idea or  
\* get an idea from the producer of the show  
\* and he'll go home and write it in two or  
\* three weeks. An hour is an act and a  
\* half of a play. He'll bring it in as a  
\* first draft and he's tied by contract, the  
\* writer's contract, to do a second draft.  
\* Sometimes, the thing is so bad that they  
\* say, "OK," and they pay him off and the  
\* story editor of the particular program  
\* will give it to another guy to rewrite or  
\* in some instances, they'll give it back  
\* to the original writer and say, "These  
\* scenes are terrible; this construction is  
\* bad, let alone the dialogue!" They don't  
\* even talk about dialogue; they talk about  
\* construction!

\* Then he'll hack it up for another week  
\* and if he spends more than two or three  
\* weeks on a script, he is not going to  
\* make as much money as he could if he  
\* didn't, you see. And a lot of these  
\* writers, as everybody else, get themselves  
\* into a bind of a standard of living and