

TELEVISION

Nielsen Ratings

1. (2) **The Cosby Show**, NBC
26.5 rating, 24.4 million homes.
2. (3) **Cheers**, NBC
24.3, 22.4 million homes.
3. (4) **A Different World**, NBC
24.1, 22.2 million homes.
4. (1) **Roseanne**, ABC
23.3, 21.5 million homes.
5. (5) **Golden Girls**, NBC
20.8, 19.2 million homes.
6. (7) **L.A. Law**, NBC
20.1, 18.5 million homes.
7. (9) **Empty Nest**, NBC
19.9, 18.3 million homes.
7. (8) **Dear John**, NBC
19.9, 18.3 million homes.
9. (9) **60 Minutes**, CBS
19.4, 17.5 million homes.
10. (15) **Unsolved Mysteries**, NBC
18.9, 17.4 million homes.
10. (6) **Wonder Years**, ABC
18.9, 17.4 million homes.
12. (14) **NFL Monday Night Football: Saints vs. 49ers**, ABC
18.1, 16.7 million homes.
12. (23) **'Small Sacrifices' — ABC Sunday Night Movie**, ABC
18.1, 16.7 million homes.
12. (12) **Who's The Boss**, ABC
18.1, 16.7 million homes.
15. (16) **Murder, She Wrote**, CBS
17.6, 16.2 million homes.

Listings include the week's ranking, with full season-to-date ranking in parentheses, rating for the week, and total homes. An "X" in parentheses denotes one-time-only presentation. A rating measures the percentage of the nation's 90.4 million TV homes.

Serious sitcom overload at CBS

Comedy is definitely the mainstay of late 80s primetime, but is there such a thing as too many laughs? Sitcom overload? CBS has taken the programming to the limits this year with their six-sitcom Monday night line up. But whether the newest additions to their laugh-in will survive remains to be seen.

CBS has had its share of problems for the past few years. The trouble began when NBC introduced *The Cosby Show* in 1984 and comedy began to upstage melodrama in the ratings. CBS' primetime soaps started to lose viewers; audiences once enthralled by *Dallas* and *Falcon Crest* began to tune in to *Cheers* and *Night Court* with the *Cosby* lead-in. It was time for CBS to switch gears.

Starting with the perennial hit *Newhart*, CBS built a ratings stronghold with several sitcoms. Since the network had to compete with ABC's *Monday Night Football*, most of the Monday shows were toward women. *Kate and Allie* was CBS' first big hit, although gradually declining ratings led to the show's cancellation last year. The next success was *Designing Women*, an untraditional sitcom that focused on four Southern career women. CBS' last ratings grabber, *Murphy Brown*, premiered last year

BILLY STOCKARD

the tube

and heralded the comeback of Candice Bergen.

This season, the network has added three new sitcoms to fill in the spaces. Heading off the night is *Major Dad*, starring Gerald McRaney as Major Mac MacGillis, a comedy about a macho marine who falls in love with a liberal reporter, Polly Cooper (Shanna Reed), and becomes involved with her three daughters. This show is obviously an attempt to attract a male audience, as well as to hold onto the family sitcom model.

McRaney is as talented here as he was in *Simon and Simon*, but that may be part of the problem. Mac's "macho-ness" gets a bit excessive when he can't say the word "bra," and uses "upper...territory...chest harnessing" instead. Something is missing. Still, it's a harmless sort of show for harmless sort of people. And anything that goes head-to-head against *ALF* deserves best wishes.

The Famous Teddy Z has received critical praise, but it's really nothing to write home about. Jon Cryer plays Teddy Zakalokis, a 23-year-old mail-

room employee of Unlimited Talent Agency who becomes a talent agent overnight. Cryer can go from annoying to tolerable to annoying again in the course of half-an-hour. One of the show's bright spots is Al Floss (Alex Rocco), a sleazy agent who's supposed to be obnoxious — that's why he's believable.

This comedy doesn't measure up to all of its hype, probably because

Since 'The People Next Door' have already moved out, CBS has had to come up with a replacement. Enter 'Doctor, Doctor'

the critics see themselves in the show's characters and are just a tad too enthusiastic. Still, it may survive because of its timeslot. Otherwise, this would be a good time to catch some real "Z's."

Since *The People Next Door* have

already moved out, CBS has had to come up with a replacement. Enter *Doctor, Doctor*, a show that debuted during the summer but probably won't make it. Matt Frewer, stars as Dr. Mike Stratford, a physician who is prone to laughing maniacally and picking on his homosexual brother, Ken.

Frewer, who used to play Max Headroom, is both the show's greatest strength and weakness. He gets the best lines, and because his humor is so abrupt and, well, weird, the program will get more laughs than the other premieres. But he looks like a mad scientist and is just too offbeat to hold the standard TV-viewing audience for long. The show's timeslot, after *Newhart*, can't help. Who will stay up for this comedy after watching five others?

Are viewers ready for three hours of straight comedy? The extremes can be seen on CBS' Monday nights, from the dull *Major Dad* to the eye-catching *Doctor, Doctor*. Men and women certainly have an alternative to football. The best bet is still to turn on the TV for *Murphy Brown*, *Designing Women*, and even *Newhart*, three welcome study breaks. But it will take more than *Teddy Z* to make many students throw down the books and make a night of it.

Nobody knows the troubles we (haven't) seen

episodes have been somewhat sporadic lately, but *General College* keeps popping up occasionally and you'd be amazed at everything that's been happening.

Jason and Courtney have returned from the farm, and after a rocky encounter with Detective Hooper, they're free, free at last. Y'know, being criminal out-laws on the run is pretty exhausting, but it's so worth it

GENERAL COLLEGE

to find true love. And what does true love always lead to? A marriage proposal in the DTH personals, of course. That's right, the lovebirds have seemed to overcome all the difficulties and marriage is around the bend. By the way, Courtney's roommate Tasha has become the producer of a student run television show. It's a drama, but she wants to make it into a night-time melodrama called *Academic Affairs*. Gee, that sounds a lot like *General*... Nah, doesn't sound at all like that.

Detective Hooper has moved beyond Jason and Courtney. Now he's after the real killer, Tessa Davenport. With the help of the now-conscious Trevor and Anne, they gave Tessa the prank of a life time. I guess coming home to the ex-boyfriend that you killed would be upsetting if you're the sensitive type. And sensitive is the word to describe Tessa. Anyway, she ended up fainting, while Hooper,

BRYAN BURNS

stew

happy at last, made excited statements like "Busted...How sweet it is..."

It turns out that Billy and Chaz have an older sister, Darby. (Hey, it was news to me too.) But there's more. Darby has a son, fathered illegitimately by a friend of Billy's at UNC. Who could it be? Don't worry, Chaz will lead us to him, I'm sure.

Paige has finally made her way out of Chapel Hill...forever. Billy of course knew nothing until he got the obligatory "I'll always love you" letter. He was devastated, but hunted down Meg to get the truth: Paige is pregnant and has left to have an abortion!! So that's what all that vomiting, exhaustion, and emotional instability was from. Again, Billy was devastated.

Speaking of leaving UNC, *General College* will never be the same after this week. We've all suffered an incredible loss: Zoe is moving on. But don't fret, the eloquent gossip queen is training a successor, Sloan. With such inspiration as "Inherit the torch" and "Make me proud," Zoe is leaving Sloan with the incredible responsibility of knowing everything about everyone. Sadly, as Zoe bids a fond adieu to UNC, we must say ciao to a woman who has truly left her

mark.

Although we've yet to see Mary Catherine, Brendan and the rest of their troubled little crew this season, Simone has still been appearing from time to time in the full splendor of her voluptuousness. Since Pop hit the bucket, Simone and sister Margot have rifled through the files, to discover sad news — the babies had been separated after birth. But she's determined to find them.

Speaking of rooting through inherited possessions, Sage found his Grandy's old UNC Yackety Yack. After flipping through hundreds of meaningless pages, he found something significant. Something about the Order of the Unmasked? Rebecca? Well, it's off to Chapel Hill for young Sage. Coincidentally, Sage's first class is a sociological survey into how family history repeats itself. Well Sage, I'd stay away from young girls named Becca and Jordan Lake — they're a bad combination.

Ken and Violet have finally had it all out. Poor Violet has been trying so hard to keep the truth about her escort-service past and present from Ken, but the game's up, baby. Ken's pal Jeff arranged a meeting between the two lovebirds, but little did Ken know that it was a purchased rendezvous of lust with the preacher's-daughter-turned-whore.

When he arrived gullible Ken thought, what a great surprise: a night in a hotel with my loving girlfriend.

But Violet could lie no more. She let it all out — the truth that is. Ken was shocked and refused to accept her claims of love and protection. He even wrote her a check (after all she is a working girl) for all the times they've had sex. Thirteen. Yes, he kept count. What a worldly guy.

Finally, Priscilla and Trisha have proved to be a dangerous combina-

tion. Alex is really losing it. With Jack gone, what's a lonely, formerly mental girl to do when she finds a red curly wig? Well, call yourself Raven and go have a good time.

Watch *General College* at 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday on STV, Carolina Cable Channel 11 and Alert Cable Channel 4

It's a good thing your father isn't alive, because you would have killed him right there!

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