

NIELSEN RATINGS

1. (2) **60 Minutes**, CBS
21.1 rating, 19.6 million homes
2. (1) **Cheers**, NBC
20.4, 19.0 million homes
3. (3) **Rosanne**, ABC
20.1, 18.7 million homes
4. (6) **Designing Women**, CBS
19.9, 18.5 million homes
5. (7) **Murphy Brown**, CBS
18.6, 17.3 million homes
6. (21) **Murder, She Wrote**, CBS
18.5, 17.2 million homes
7. (8) **America's Funniest Home Videos**, ABC
18.1, 16.9 million homes
8. (9) **Empty Nest**, NBC
18.0, 16.8 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.

Singing the Wednesday night blues

Cop Rock

Peter Onorati, Anne Bobby, Larry Joshua, David Gianopoulous, Teri Austin

Wednesday 10:00 pm
ABC (WTVD Channel 11)

Whenever TV tries to be a little bit innovative, there's always a chance it's not going to grab much of an audience. Such is the case with *Cop Rock*, Steven Bochco's latest television offering, which follows on the heels of *Hill Street Blues* and *Doogie Howser, M.D.* Only this time, Bochco has added a new

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element: the actors sometimes sing their lines.

For example: Det. Vincent LaRusso (Peter Onorati), on trial for murder, has just been put into a cell. If you're expecting him to give some dramatic speech, don't hold your breath. LaRusso starts to sing.

What was that? He's singing? Has he completely snapped? This cop is being escorted into a prison full of people he's helped put away, and he's singing? LaRusso may be crazy, but he's brave and confident, singing, "You can't keep a good man down."

Next, we have a girl named Patty who's sold her baby for \$200 to buy drugs. She's told Officer Vicki Quinn (Anne Bobby) that she wants to clean up and get her baby back. But both Quinn and Captain John Hollander (Larry Joshua) want Patty booked. A disillusioned Patty assaults Vicki with a song, where, once again, we were expecting some sort of a dramatic soliloquy.

"You lied," Patty sings. "I didn't

want much, but you gave me nothing. If that's all there is, there's nothing to say." Hey, if this job only lasts one or two episodes, here's a prime candidate for a Reba McEntire backup singer.

Meanwhile, the average viewer probably thinks, "This is so stupid! Don't the other people notice she's singing?" The actors do look at each other with some pretty blank expressions during these lyrics. That might be a sign that the songs symbolize some sort of emotional release. If Patty merely yelled the lines at Vicki, *Cop Rock* would be just your average cop show. It's far from that.

Think how ordinary it would be for Vicki and her cop "husband," Andy (David Gianopoulous), to try entrapping a baby dealer if they only spoke. It's an okay story, but the serious moment lightens substantially when the baby dealer starts to sing to the couple, offering them a baby for only \$11 thousand:

*When you're shopping for a dream come true,
A little package in pink or blue —
I'm the baby merchant,
Tots are us —
I'll give you all the service,
And none of the fuss.*

Where are Mary Poppins and Bert? All we need now is John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John to follow up with "Summer Lovin'."

This is a throwback to the days when Angela Lansbury and Julie Andrews would reach a certain point in a movie scene and then burst into song. However, the reaction of the modern audience is disbelief. There haven't been many successful musicals in recent years. More often, movie soundtracks are packaged, making songs fit into scenes in some insignificant way, all for the purpose of selling a tape or CD, something on the order of *Pretty Woman*. Bochco is trying to bring the musical to television. Does it work?

Well ... the music's not that great, but it is interesting trying to figure out when somebody will be singing next.

There are a few good scenes without music. LaRusso discovers that his attractive attorney (Teri Austin, formerly the maniacal Jill on *Knots Landing*) has posted his bail for him and shows up one night to thank her; he soon finds her undoing his belt. Always following standard legal procedure, Austin informs her client of his Miranda rights while she binds his hands with his belt.

"I'm taking you into custody," she says. "Do you understand each of the Constitutional rights I've just explained to you? Good, then assume the position."

Wonder if she'll frisk him?

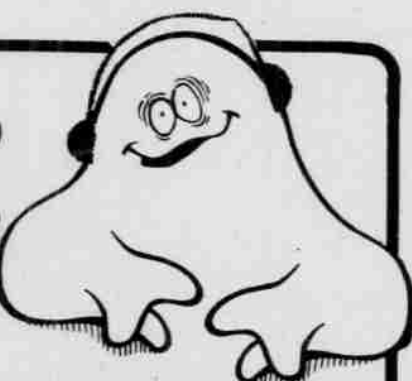
Cop Rock is a rare show not only because of the music, but also because it doesn't take itself too seriously. Steven Bochco can't afford to, right now; the ratings reality is too depressing. *Cop Rock* is down in the ratings cellar, buffeted on all sides by unknown Fox shows. Daring to be different isn't always profitable. But this one's worth a look, if there's still time. And even if there's not, Bochco will bounce back. As LaRusso says, "You can't keep a good man down."

THE RATINGS

- — miss it
- — watch it and rag on it
- — if nothing better is on
- — watch it
- — invite people over

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