



# Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events That Made Us Who We Are Today

By Steven D. Stark

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How did *Dallas* pave the way for the Reagan era?

Would Oswald have been assassinated if the cameras weren't rolling?

Who really loved Lucy more--Ricky or Ethel?...and what does that say about relationships?

You may think you know television--but when NPR commentator Steven Stark is finished pushing your buttons with fighting words and brilliant insights, you'll see in a whole new way what television has done to us as a nation. From Beaver to *Roseanne*, Ed Sullivan to *Oprah*, *Monday Night Football* to MTV, Stark takes us on a guided tour of the tube, providing startling revelations about the power of its sixty most important shows and events in the history of television. He catches in bright focus a hilarious, strange, and compelling image of ourselves as reflected on the small screen, and he shows us, with striking logic, the awesome power of television over our future and our fate.

Discover:

The most revealing and significant leading man on TV...Bob Newhart

Bill Cosby as racial trailblazer...and failure

Why *The Beverly Hillbillies* was the watershed program that kicked off the ongoing values debate--and the rise of the Christian Coalition

How *Wheel of Fortune* helped bring down communism and end the Cold War

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**Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events That Made Us Who We Are Today** By Steven D. Stark **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Do you love TV? Do you want a way to silence those poor souls who chastise you for spending too many hours in front of the tube? *Glued to the Set* is what you've been looking for. NPR commentator, cultural critic, and unapologetic TV-watcher Steven Stark explores six decades of television to find the shows and the events that prove how important this medium has been in the shaping of modern American culture. From Milton Berle's invention of TV-comedy to "ER and the fight for health-care reform," Stark engages in serious, thoroughly researched analysis while occasionally moving his tongue towards his cheek.

He examines the subversive pleasures of *The Monkees*, and the ways in which sitcoms both reflect and create ideas about family. The book's serious premise is kept afloat by Stark's lively prose, and this allows his points to hit home with a force that would be lost in a more academic arena. After reading *Glued to the Set*, *America's Funniest Home Videos* will never seem the same again: "As the theme song says: 'America, America, this is you.'" --*Simon Leake*

From Library Journal

Imagine using a remote control to zap through television history, surfing from program to news event, catching provocative glimpses of American society over the past five decades. Journalist and pop-culture commentator for NPR, Stark provides such an experience in this collection of 60 essays on seminal television moments. He supplies a wealth of behind-the-scenes details and offers incisive commentary on topics as diverse as "Space Television" in the Sixties, "Masterpiece Theatre and the Failure of PBS" in the Seventies, "Dallas and the Rise of Republican Mythology" in the Eighties, and "How Wheel of Fortune Won the Cold War" in the Nineties. Stark demonstrates how each program or event influenced America in fundamental ways. His elegant prose is laced with wit and supplemented by a bibliography of sources for each essay, making this a sterling purchase for any library. ?Neal Baker, Dickinson Coll. Lib., Carlisle, Pa. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

Maintaining that understanding TV is a matter of understanding "its key shows," Stark understands 60 of them. For example, *America's Funniest Home Videos*, he opines, is "the most democratic show on television--a populist rebellion packaged as programming" because it makes "the audience at home the stars" while "giving the studio audience the power to decide the best video of the show"; furthermore, it was most popular when the Berlin Wall was torn down *and* when a "virtually unprecedented number of voters" went for H. Ross Perot! Coincidence or sign o' the times? Analyzing the implications of stuff like *Howdy Doody* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* is always fun, and Stark does it deftly and impudently. Oh, his take on how Milton Berle clips fail to amuse today, though making some good, mildly cruel points, can recall the sage who loved Abbott and Costello but felt the Three Stooges were undignified. Yet his effort is always great browsing, even (especially?) when he shows his radical stripes--he disses Ed Murrow! *Mike Tribby*

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**Jessica Garcia:**

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