

# Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

Fifteen years ago when all pop singers were crooning "Funny Valentine" and dreaming of a white Christmas all year long, an emotional chap named Johnnie Ray exploded on turntables from coast to coast with a song called "Cry." You remember. It was Instant Spasm. And we all went crazy.

Watching him perform was an experience that was not always pleasant but it's a cinch you never forgot it. Ray seemed to be strung together like a tall, thin marionette—all legs and arms. He didn't move; he dangled. And he played with the microphone as if it was a loved one's ear.

Recently, he appeared as a guest on "Hollywood Palace." He hasn't changed. He squeezed out the lyrics to

"The Little White Cloud that Cried" as if he hated to part with a single note. He worked his arms and legs as hard as he worked his accompanist. By the time he was through with the song he was pigeon-toed and wet. And so was the audience.

I hadn't worked so hard sitting down since Judy Garland sang "The Man That Got Away."

MOST OF us have forgotten how important he was in paving the way for a decade of physical singers not heard since Al Jolson sang "Mammy" and cried for a Suwanee river he had never seen. In the years between Jolson and Ray the only place for an emotional singer was grand opera.

Ray came on so strong the only direction left to go was into the bumps and grinds of Elvis Presley. But he had class while Presley smelled of burlesque and bottomless popcorn boxes. While rehearsing for "The Hollywood Palace," Ray put it this way:

"When I started singing professionally the so-called trend was rhythm and blues. Then it went into rock and roll, which is nothing more than bad rhythm and blues. But each generation has to grasp its own identity and cling to it. Thankfully, there are voices who transcend trends. Andy Williams is a good example."

Ray's next television appearance is on the Wayne Newton special "One More Time" which will be seen on ABC this spring. It's an interesting combination.

WAYNE IS one of the most electric performers in the field today—bang, crash, hit 'em on the head, knock 'em in the aisles. "It's the kind of personal magnetism the critics used to say I had," said Ray a little wistfully.

Ray's problem is one that faces all performers in show business today. The path is strewn with song stylists who sparkled for a time and were bypassed. The people who applaud them are as faithless as chorus girls. Presley survived because he grew up with his fans. When they stopped screaming, got married, and became hooked on installments he cut his shimmy and his hair and became a movie star.

"What I have to do now is reaffirm what the critics wrote about me," said Ray, "and try to recapture a generation that only vaguely recalls my records."

Despite the glamor and the applause, it's a hard life.

"THERE'S A rumor going around that 'He and She' is not showing up well with that Nielsen crowd and CBS program chiefs are starting to get cross-eyed with anxiety. This is unfortunate because the Wednesday evening series is far above average for mass-produced situation comedy and its stars—Dick Benjamin, Paula Prentiss and Jack Cassidy—are a refreshing trio who seem to know what they're doing. But 'He and She' has no artificial laugh machine and this is very unsettling for home viewers who like to be told when something is funny.

## Obituaries

### Mrs. Robbins

Private services were scheduled for Mrs. Evelyn Gladys Robbins, of 18801 Hawthorne Blvd., who died Thursday.

Mrs. Robbins was born in Pentwater, Mich., in 1900 and had lived here for seven years. She formerly lived in Pasadena.

Surviving is her husband, Burneston O. Robbins of Torrance; a nephew, Eugene Gilmore, Tampa, Fla.

The family has suggested that donations be made in her name to the Damon Runyon Cancer Fund or to the March of Dimes.

Stone and Myers Mortuary was in charge of private inurnment at Pacific Crest Cemetery.

### Carl Swanson

Funeral services for Carl Hjalmer Swanson, of 2357 W. 234th St., were held Saturday at the Halverson-Leavell Mortuary with the Rev. Ernest M. Matthews officiating.

Mr. Swanson, who was born in Wisconsin in 1903, lived here for 35 years before his death Thursday in Harbor City.

Surviving are a daughter, Marlene McKenna, Torrance; a sister, Viola Larson, San Diego; a brother, Lester Swanson, Los Angeles, and two grandchildren, Kent and Elizabeth, of Torrance.

Interment was in Pacific Coast Cemetery.

### Mrs. Abraham

Funeral services for Mrs. Dovie Lou Abraham, mother of world famous racing drivers Parnelli and Paul Jones, were held here Friday with

### Jewish Youth Will Present Race Drama

The Youth Group of Temple Menorah will present an original play by the Operation Bootstrap Players, Sunday, Feb. 4, 8 p.m. at the Temple, 1101 Camino Real, Redondo Beach.

The play, "A Glass House Shattered" by Edwin Baldwin, deals with Watts family life, and has been widely acclaimed by audiences over Southern California.

All proceeds from the evening will be donated to Operation Bootstrap.

the Rev. Mrs. Charlotte Shook of the Keystone Assembly of God officiating.

Mrs. Abraham, a resident here for 20 years, lived at 1410 W. 216th St. She died Wednesday. Also surviving are her husband, Howard; a daughter, Janice Ruth Jones, both of Torrance; another son, Gary Abraham, Corpus Christi, Tex.; four sisters, three brothers, and four grandchildren.

Stone and Myers Mortuary handled funeral arrangements.

Funeral services for William Russell Cochran, 2956 W. 118th St., were conducted Friday at the Halverson-Leavell Mortuary with the Rev. Joseph Morton officiating. Burial was in Roosevelt Memorial Park.

Mr. Cochran, who died Jan. 23 in a Torrance hospital, was born March 22, 1917, in Little Rock, Ark. He had lived in the area for five years.

Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Daniel Tobik of Louisiana; four brothers, James of Torrance, Charles of Inglewood, and R. L. Futch and J. L. Futch of Louisiana; and a sister, Laura Dean Ivey of Louisiana.

Surviving are a daughter, Marlene McKenna, Torrance; a sister, Viola Larson, San Diego; a brother, Lester Swanson, Los Angeles, and two grandchildren, Kent and Elizabeth, of Torrance.

### Convention Delegate Selected

A committee of teachers and administrators has been named by Dr. Lloyd Jones, curriculum consultant for the Torrance Unified School District, to look into the seventh and eighth grade departmentalized program.

Teachers participating in the study include Michael Brajevich, Nancy Jones, Dominick Pulone, Carl Strong, Gary MacLean, Marjory West, Sally Pendrick, Thomas Ballain and Robert Fine.

Administrators include Dr. Roderick McDaniel, administrator of the Educational Materials Building; and four principals, Dr. Ralph Wilson, Hickory Elementary School; Martin Beaudet, Victor Elementary School; George Chalkson, Calle Mayor Elementary School; and Dr. Frank Tyrrell, Edison Elementary School.

### Education Employes Installed

Educational Office Employees from the Torrance area school districts and 53 other school districts in Los Angeles County attended the LACAE installation luncheon Saturday in Manhattan Beach.

Guest speaker was Dr. Dale Wickstrom, president of the Torrance Elementary Principals' Association.

Area officers installed were Mrs. June Baggett of Torrance, president, and Mrs. Lois Marshall of South Bay Union High School District, second vice president.

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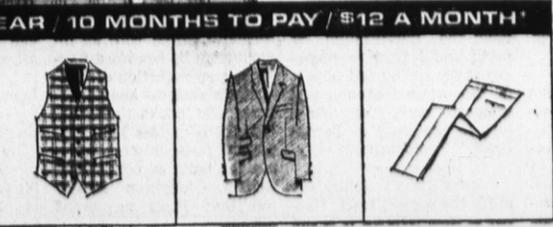
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