

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

Last year, we got the miniskirt. This summer we'll have the minibikini, a combination of G-string and precision-engineered suction cups.

Next fall television will bring us the ultimate abbreviation: The presidential minipitch whereby the American public will be sold a national leader with the same efficiency it is sold tranquilizers and cigarettes.

For a girl-watcher there is a decided advantage in both miniskirt and minibikini: the less dry-goods, the more we see of the girl. Unfortunately, it doesn't work this way with the presidential minipitch. The shorter the speech, the less we know about the candidate.

THE BEST means yet devised to show off both major candidates, their opinions and their policies to the largest number of voters is the television debate, first used in the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. Their live encounters caused the older generation to marvel at the magic of TV. The younger generation of viewers which grew up with television accepted the face-to-face encounters as a logical and honest part of the race for the White House.

In 1964, it perplexed both generations to learn that LBJ ruled out the TV debate as unfitting for a President already in office. (Both Kennedy and Nixon were outside aspirants.) He has flatly re-

used such debates again this year. One reason given is that in the heat of personal debate a President might unintentionally reveal some major policy secret, but this seems unlikely in view of Johnson's success in keeping an entire war from the American public.

IS THE TV debate "unfitting" because it demeans the office and the image of the Chief Executive? Surely television is less demeaning than displaying the scar from a gall bladder operation.

Is a President's schedule too crowded for TV debates? In all of history it has never kept one from hitting the campaign trail. Does the aspirant have a freer hand for questions and issues than the incumbent? If so, surely the public understands such an advantage, and often an evasive answer given with polish and humor can be a useful measure of a nominee's diplomacy.

Is the President in danger of making a major mistake in front of the live television cameras without the protection of taping and editing? Pierre Salinger admitted this was the major argument against televising the presidential press conferences at the start of the Kennedy Administration. Fortunately it was overruled and JFK's regular question-and-answer encounters with newsmen became a major asset both for the brilliancy of his image and the information of the public.

WITH THE debate closed, only three avenues remain open for the candidate to approach the public: evening newscast coverage of major addresses, half-hour speeches timed for TV and paid for by the two parties, and one-minute TV commercials.

The half-hour speeches are canned and look like it. They're out. The threat of un-

ruly demonstrations will undoubtedly curtail the public speeches long familiar to American political campaign. The President is well aware of this danger, and his opponent will probably have similar apprehensions.

What's left is the one-minute minipitch which was pioneered successfully by Nelson Rockefeller in the New York Governor's race in 1966. Both parties will use them as a major campaign tool this fall. Like the tranquilizers and the cigarettes, let's hope the list of their ingredients and their dangers to personal health aren't obscured by the pretty models who hold up the packages.

Man, Woman of Year Selected at El Camino

Two El Camino College students, Feb. 29, at Los Angeles Trade Technical College.

Winners from that competition will compete in a statewide contest, April 8, at the Junior College Association meeting in Fresno.

Miss Hamlin, 1967 ECC Homecoming Queen, and Merina, former commissioner of publications, were each awarded a \$25 savings bond. The area winners will receive \$100 bonds, and the state winners, \$1,000.

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