

# Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

The new television season hasn't even started yet and the stars of two new shows are already in trouble. One is a tough lawyer and the other is a gentle bear. Neither one is really what he seems.

"Judd for the Defense" (recently shortened to just "Judd") is a new ABC Friday night entry in the cops-and-robbers category. Its title character is Clinton Judd, a Texas trial attorney and ABC describes him this way: "He is a special kind of lawyer. He takes only tough cases, the ones no other attorney will touch — the kind that makes headlines from coast to coast. Half a century ago, Judd might have been a gun-slinging lawman in a big Southwestern stock town. In his modern setting Judd, Texan by birth, is the counterpart of the modern, slashing criminal attorneys of today who are helping to rewrite the statutes instead of sleeping over them. Justice is Judd's goal and in seeking it he frequently finds himself at odds with others in the legal profession, including his partner . . ."

I SWEAR it would take an attorney to figure out what the devil THAT paragraph really means — and by golly that's just what happened. A Houston lawyer named Percy Foreman read it and decided that ABC was talking about him and immediately notified the network to "expect to have the hell sued out of you" if the series goes on the air on Sept. 8 as scheduled.

ABC's "Judd" has been further described as a "high-powered, high-priced, high-tension, high-living attorney" with offices in an unnamed Houston building.

Apparently seeing himself in every purple word of that description, Foreman shot off the hot letter telling ABC that he protests the invasion

of his privacy and the appropriation of his "life's work."

"I FEEL LIKE I should give them notice in advance and I have done so," he said. "I do not intend to go down without a fight," said the high-powered, high-priced, high-tension, high-living Foreman, whose most recent courtroom technique resulted in the acquittal of Melvin Lane Powers, charged with the death of Jacques Mossier, the Houston millionaire who was killed in Florida.

Meanwhile, the publicists at ABC were delirious with joy at the free publicity. Producer Paul Monash (who also produced "Peyton Place") admitted that Judd — like all TV heroes — does seem to have his real-life counterparts. "He may bring to life men like Foreman, Edward Bennett Williams or Lee Bail-

ly. Actually he is none of these and all of these," observed Monash.

"Judd" is portrayed by Carl Betz, whose acting career up to this point is crowned by six years as the low-tension, low-powered, low-priced husband on "The Donna Reed Show." Maybe THAT'S what Foreman is apprehensive about!

One thing is certain: even if "Judd" IS Foreman, by the time the TV writers finish pushing his character through the Hollywood meat grinder, any resemblance to him, either living or dead, won't be coincidental. It will be miraculous.

"GENTLE BEN" is another matter. This essentially phony new CBS show is aimed at children and the title role is played by a large black bear. Ben is owned by a little boy whose father is a Florida game warden played by Dennis Weaver.

The recent deaths caused by Grizzlies in Glacier National Park and elsewhere have attracted many complaints about the false impression youngsters might get from the sight of an eight-year-old nuzzling a 650-pound bear called "Gentle Ben." Actually Ben is "gentle" only because he had all his teeth pulled and his claws removed. Even so, one blow from his paw could kill a man. Two months ago Weaver made this comment to the press: "A bear never becomes attached to a human. It is in their nature to be affectionate — even to a trainer."

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KHJ-TV Feature