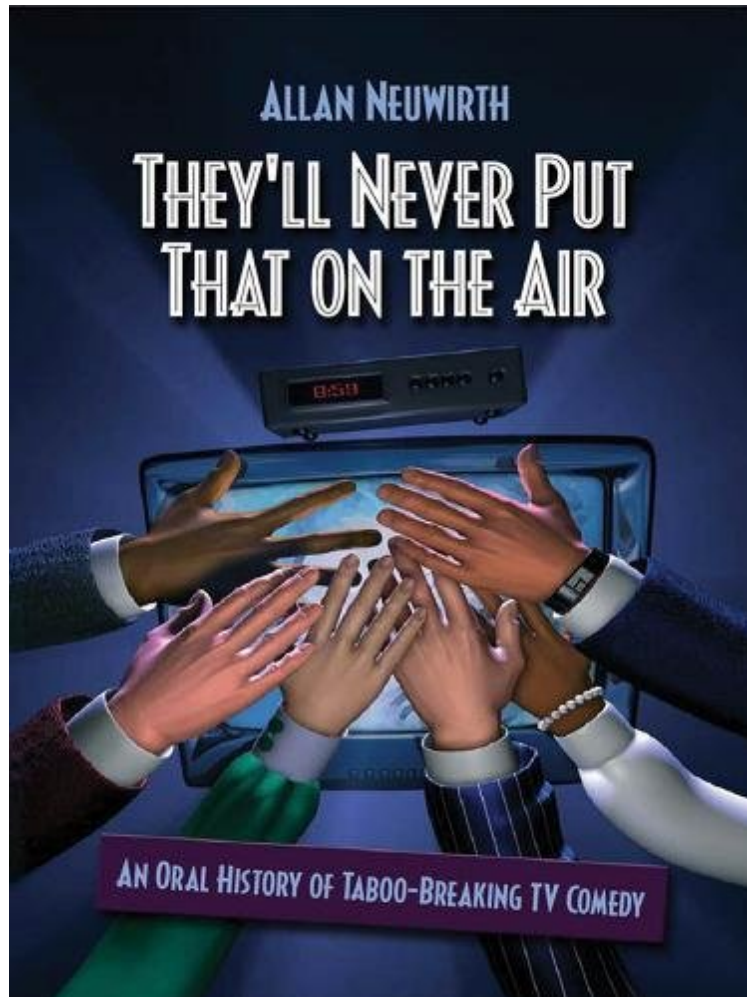


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They'll Never Put That on the Air: An Oral History of Taboo-Breaking Comedy

Allan Neuwirth

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Allan Neuwirth : **They'll Never Put That on the Air: An Oral History of Taboo-Breaking Comedy** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *They'll Never Put That on the Air: An Oral History of Taboo-Breaking Comedy*:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Thoughtful and intelligently done By R. Gorey Like his previous work, "Makin' Toons", Neuwirth's new book takes a unique look at the television industry by examining the lives, intentions, and minds of the people who created groundbreaking shows. Presented in an interview format (though not structured as actual interviews) "They'll Never Put That on the Air" follows the evolution of the half hour sitcom, from its early days in the fifties through the dense, complex, and controversial shows that appeared in the nineties. The approach is unusual: the growth of an industry seen through the filter of the censors at "standards and practices" whose

often archaic rules and regulations forced writers and performers from the "Golden Age" to be even more creative. The result, according to Neuwirth, was elegant innuendo, clever misdirection...and better television. Later, as these restrictions were relaxed, television became more "realistic", but somehow less craftily subversive: shows like "Seinfeld", with its ferocious sense of the absurd, are the exception, not the rule. Neuwirth traces this journey through an admittedly subjective list of breakout hits: The Smothers Brothers, Mary Tyler Moore, All in the Family, Maude, and of course M*A*S*H and Seinfeld. Using these seminal shows as a barometer of public tastes and private genius, Neuwirth offers a cultural cross section of the past fifty years, and the result is informative and addictive. Thankfully it's not catty and dishy as well, though there are certainly angry and disgruntled voices along the way. A fine job of television scholarship: the only thing I might suggest is that the second edition be longer. This is a case where more information would have been welcome. Some elegant caricatures by noted cartoonist Glen Hanson add to the polish of this thoughtful work, and elevate it above the pack. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By Daniel Calegari Nice reading 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Walk Through History By Schaefffer Good book. Walk through history of TV. Very enjoyable to see the progression of Television even if all of the methods are not the most agreeable. The factual tidbits and trivia are riveting.

In the 1950s, Lucille Ball couldn't even say the word pregnant on TV. But by the 1990s, Carrie Bradshaw and her posse could say everything there is to say about sex and demonstrate most of it. How have broadcast standards changed from the dawn of television till today? Through interviews with the creators of landmark shows, author Allan Neuwirth traces that history, revealing how the upheaval of the 1960s led to edgier fare such as The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour; how counterculture baby boomers made Saturday Night Live-style satire possible; how stand-up comedians changed the sitcom landscape; how UPN and the WB raised eyebrows with comedies aimed at minorities; and much more. In this age of FCC crackdowns, They'll Never Put That on the Air is as timely as it is entertaining and informative. Firsthand accounts of life in the TV trenches from producers and writers Handy genealogy chart traces TV comedy from the 1950s to today Insider author is an award-winning producer, director, and writer of TV comedy Allworth Press, an imprint of Skyhorse Publishing, publishes a broad range of books on the visual and performing arts, with emphasis on the business of art. Our titles cover subjects such as graphic design, theater, branding, fine art, photography, interior design, writing, acting, film, how to start careers, business and legal forms, business practices, and more. While we don't aspire to publish a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are deeply committed to quality books that help creative professionals succeed and thrive. We often publish in areas overlooked by other publishers and welcome the author whose expertise can help our audience of readers.

"A fascinating read. Allan Neuwirth has deepened my appreciation of television's most daring and successful comedies. -- Susie Essman, Comedian and Actress, Curb Your Enthusiasm" Reading or should I say, devouring this wonderfully (and literally) outspoken book is nearly as much fun as watching the shows themselves. -- Matt Roush, Senior Critic, TV Guide From the Publisher Neuwirth, a prolific writer, producer, director, and syndicated cartoonist (Chelsea Boys), is clearly fascinated with American television's contentious evolution from the 1960s to today, a time which took us from married couples shown sleeping in separate beds, and forbidden words like pregnant, to the nearly anything-goes-outrageousness of today's on-air antics. "It was just a small group of groundbreaking primetime comedy series that caused TV to grow up, with Norman Lear's All in the Family (CBS, 1971) as the main dividing point," Neuwirth points out. "We really have to view television in terms of B.L. or A.L. Before Lear and After Lear." Or as the great comedy writer Larry Gelbart observes in the book, "With that first (toilet) flush, you know, all of television's inhibitions and ridiculous rules went down the drain, literally." While researching and writing They'll Never Put That On The Air, the author quickly realized that it would be smarter to let the voices of the famed TV creators tell their behind-the-scenes stories themselves. So the book became an oral history, filled with firsthand tales of determination and defiance, legendary battles with censors, and great showbiz anecdotes. Still, Neuwirth's wry voice and cogent observations are very much on hand to guide us throughout. The voices of many of the brightest lights behind these landmark shows, like Lear, Reiner, Gelbart, Tom Smothers, George Schlatter, Dick Martin, Susan Harris, Allan Burns, Jay Sandrich, Valerie Harper, Carroll O'Connor, Jean Stapleton, Grant Tinker, Fred Silverman, Larry Charles, and scores of others as well as their then-adversaries, legendary chief censors Bill Tankersley and Alfred Schneider are present and accounted for in the book. Filled with dozens of photos and distinctive black and white line drawings by artist Glen Hanson, They'll Never Put That On The Air is both a visual and verbal treat, and reads as a terrific documentary on how TV grew up while making us laugh. From the Author At present, however, with a federal government in place that continues to push an aggressively conservative agenda, Neuwirth wonders which direction the medium is headed. "Much has changed since the 60s, of course... but there's no denying that we've been backsliding lately," he notes. "The sad truth is, many of TV's most daring shows and ultimately the greatest successes would never make it today. Religious organizations lobby harder than ever, threatening boycotts which cause affiliates to turn away series like the recently cancelled The Book of Daniel because they perceive them as anti-Christian without even looking at them. All this chatter about red states vs. blue states... what's appropriate for audiences to view... whether conservative private

interest groups are still using Janet Jackson's brief flashing of her nipple on national TV two years ago to further their own aims... the massive fines the FCC continues to levy against TV and radio networks for language and content deemed vulgar... most recently it's the S-word on cable... well, the subject matter of *They'll Never Put That On The Air* has never been more topical or relevant."