

# arts & entertainment

## Geraldo bids 'Good Night America' with late night show

May 1, 1975  
From Excerpt

"It's not at all like the Tonight Show.

"It's more like the Tomorrow Show, except that, hopefully, it's broader-based than that, because we see a lot more location stuff.

"It's not a talk show.  
"It's not strictly a 60 Minutes type program either.

"It's a combination of those things with something of the old American dream machine thrown in."

It is Good Night America, the serious talk show that started as an occasional feature of ABC's Wide World of Entertainment and that has ABC executives wanting to air it more regularly.

The talk show with pronounced informality.

The show that fares well in the Nielsen ratings.

### Geraldo Rivera

The person describing Good Night America is Geraldo Rivera, the show's host and the man whose "own little production company" puts the show together.

The man who was born of a Jewish father and a Puerto Rican father, and who, 2,000 local broadcasts ago, was hired as the token Puerto Rican by WABC Eyewitness News in New York.

The man who has five radio commentaries to write and a local news

story to do that day, but who still takes a few minutes of his time to explain how Good Night America operates, what philosophy he and his staff try to follow and why he devoted an entire 90-minute show to argue the need to reopen the investigation into the assassination of President John Kennedy.

### News Magazine

In the opening of his show, Rivera calls Good Night America a "second-generation news magazine."

But, on the other end of the telephone wire, in his basement office of the ABC News building in New York, Rivera says he is not quite sure what kind of show Good Night America is, except that maybe it is a conglomeration that we kind of invented ... it's terribly free-wheeling."

Free-wheeling means considering whatever topics he and his staff of "about half a dozen people," all younger than the 31-year-old Rivera, consider interesting.

Free-wheeling enough to make ABC executives "curiously schizophrenic" about some of the potentially controversial subjects the show presents: schizophrenic because they like the success of the show, but worry about the possibility of law suits.

### Goes places

"They realize that the reason people watch Good Night America is because it goes places where other

shows haven't gone before, so they like that," Rivera says. "But then, on the other hand, as soon as you get into something controversial, they always assign a dozen lawyers to make sure you're not going to get sued."

For example, he says, he ran a great risk of being sued by the family of Abraham Zapruder for showing a copy of the Zapruder's home movies showing the assassination of President Kennedy.

Commission report on the assassination, Rivera showed the film, but not before ABC made him sign a paper indemnifying them in case of a law suit, he says.

### Public domain

"Our position was that that film was, and certainly should be, in the public domain," he says. "That a film, probably the most significant historical document of this century,

try to project from the theory -- hopefully the correct theory -- that we are representative of a large segment of the population and the things that are of interest to us are of some interest to the people who are watching the program."

Letters Rivera receives from readers seem to agree with him, he says, because they represent a variety of reasons for watching the show.

### Positive feedback

"The range we get in letters -- and that's really the only positive feedback I get -- the live audience isn't really representative of the television audience -- the letters indicate a broad spectrum of reasons and that's cool," he says, "that's cool. I just hope that people take a little away with them. I hope that in some way the show is educational or informative aside from being educational.

If, on Good Night America, he does anything differently than other talk or news show hosts, "it's just maybe to look harder for those kinds of topics that I think I can, in some way by presenting to the American people, prick their consciences and cause some kind of movement, some kind of change on that issue," says Geraldo Rivera, the man who was a storefront lawyer before becoming a broadcaster.

The man who says big breaks don't exist, but if they did, his would be being hired by WABC in 1970, because before that he never had any intentions of being on television.

The man who believes that, in television journalism, "if you think you can gimmick your way through or think you can dazzle them with your style or your footwork, you're just real wrong because you can do that maybe with one shot, if you're on television once, or five times, or ten times. But when it's your life, when it's your career, that's what you have to do, I mean you have to work hard or people will see right through you."

The man who can end an interview by saying: "And ... I think I'd better go to work now."

The man who is Good Night America.

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--Geraldo

Rivera says he got the film from Robert Groden, who "got it from a film laboratory in Los Angeles. I think he said he originally printed it from Time-Life. I'm not sure where he got it."

In a show devoted entirely to arguing the need to dismiss the Warren

certainly the most significant historical film of this century, can't be copyrighted and it can't be withheld from the public. So we showed the film."

The discussion resulted in a flood of letters from viewers, Rivera says, which resulted in the decision to do the show.

"I think of myself as an active journalist," he says. "I think any good journalist is interested in truth. Truth is an absolute. You can't destroy the truth so long as truth is your goal, all that stuff about advocacy and objectivity becomes moot."

In an attempt to abide by this advocacy journalism, Rivera says he tries to do many things.

He tries to highlight realities that need some attention. He tries to do what other shows are not doing, not in an attempt to "be offbeat, but just to cover necessary corners that aren't being covered."

He tries to do what he does best. And what Rivera says Rivera does best is to report about real life.

### Real life

The real life of Lenny Bruce, independent of the Dustin Hoffman/Valerie Perrine image, accompanied by a film documentary of Bruce and his problems with drugs and the police, and complete with Bruce's 19-year-old daughter Kitty as a guest.

The real life of drug abuse and poverty in Harlem.

The real life of Clifford Irving. Rivera and his staff decide what topics Good Night America will feature, from "the super frivolous to the heavy and profound," this range is a legitimate one, he says, and one on which he hopes he can expand so that Good Night America does not become a New York-based program.

"We know the things that are of interest to use, just the six of us. We



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

## Discomania invades local dance studios

Apr. 18, 1979  
By Cheryl Kisling

If discomania has finally gotten a hold of you and you don't want to have two left feet on the dance floor, then it is time to consider taking lessons.

There are many Lincoln studios offering disco lessons and most are open during the day and evening for the convenience of anyone wishing to learn.

See DISCO on 10