



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1993

"TO ASSESS THE PERFORMANCE OF JOURNALISM... TO HELP STIMULATE CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN THE PROFESSION, AND TO SPEAK OUT FOR WHAT IS RIGHT, FAIR, AND DECENT"

From the founding editorial, 1961



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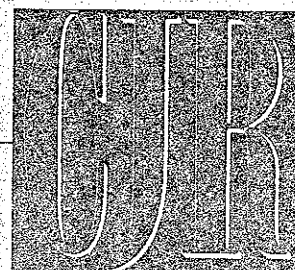
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Danny Schechter's Rights & Wrongs

A pioneering TV newsmagazine tries to survive year one

by Mike Hoyt

Globalvision, an independent television production company, is located in what its literature calls the "historic National Screen Building" on Broadway in Manhattan...

Straight ahead is the office of one of Globalvision's founders, Danny Schechter, a place with two clocks, one of which works, and stacks of magazines and newspapers...

For a TV production company, the place is a little quiet. Globalvision produces Rights & Wrongs, the weekly human rights TV newsmagazine you

Mike Hoyt is associate editor of CJR.

may not have heard of because your local public television station runs it at noon on Saturday, or worse. Fifteen of the eighteen people who put together Rights & Wrongs had been laid off just a few days earlier...

All the TV world, he and Schechter point out to anyone who will listen, is rushing to put out newsmagazines. All except PBS. And here is Rights & Wrongs, they'll continue, a topical newsmagazine with a respected anchor...

"Human rights is a story whose time has come," says O'Connor. "With the fall of communism, the end of the cold war, the question is not East-West, but how do you treat your people?"

Schechter gestures toward a stack of human-rights organization reports on a shelf — all thoroughly researched and well written, he says, but generally ignored, and none with the power of a television image.

newsmagazine shows, the stories they are proudest of are often human rights stories," he says. "Whether it's 60 Minutes blowing the whistle on prison labor in China or Day One investigating an incident of racism — these stories get large shares...

Using a spiel along these lines, Schechter and O'Connor spent two years raising some \$750,000 to fund Rights & Wrongs, most of the money coming from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation...

A deal struck this summer with WNET, New York's flagship public television station, has given the show a reprieve. By becoming a co-producer of Rights & Wrongs and letting Globalvision use the station's facilities...

“With the fall of communism, the question is not East-West, but how do you treat your people?”

—Rory O'Connor

Recently I took ten *Rights & Wrongs* videotapes home, but I put off looking at them. They had titles like “Ethnic Fault Lines,” “War Crimes,” “Female Genital Mutilation,” the kind of thing one may feel a duty to get to but, uh, isn't it time for *The Simpsons*?

Finally, I watched, and kept watching. The half-hour program generally features at least one long piece, followed by a related Hunter-Gault interview, followed by shorter segments in a “Rights Reel,” and ends with a segment with a cultural theme. In the Rights Reel the pace is quick — Schechter and O'Connor are aiming in part at the MTV generation — and it often includes the kind of footage you haven't seen elsewhere: dry, cracking land in southern Iraq where Saddam Hussein is draining marshes and forcing the evacuation of whole villages, for example. Some of these short pieces moved too fast for me. If I want to see complex issues without much context, I can always watch the evening news.

The longer stories, often “video diaries” by filmmakers from the countries in question, were something else again. Faraway issues and dramas were presented on a human scale, with clarity and a sense of place, thus making them fascinating — and not so far away.

In one of the show's “Ethnic Fault Lines” series, for example, a video diary explores the new European racism by visiting a tavern in Prague with some skinheads, baby-faced tough guys who drink their beer and sing their songs about beating up on blacks, all the while saluting a Confederate American flag. The viewer gets close enough to see them as twisted human beings, not as a distant political phenomenon. A video diary from Hungary, once the most liberal nation in the old Soviet bloc, opens with a shot of hundreds of young neo-

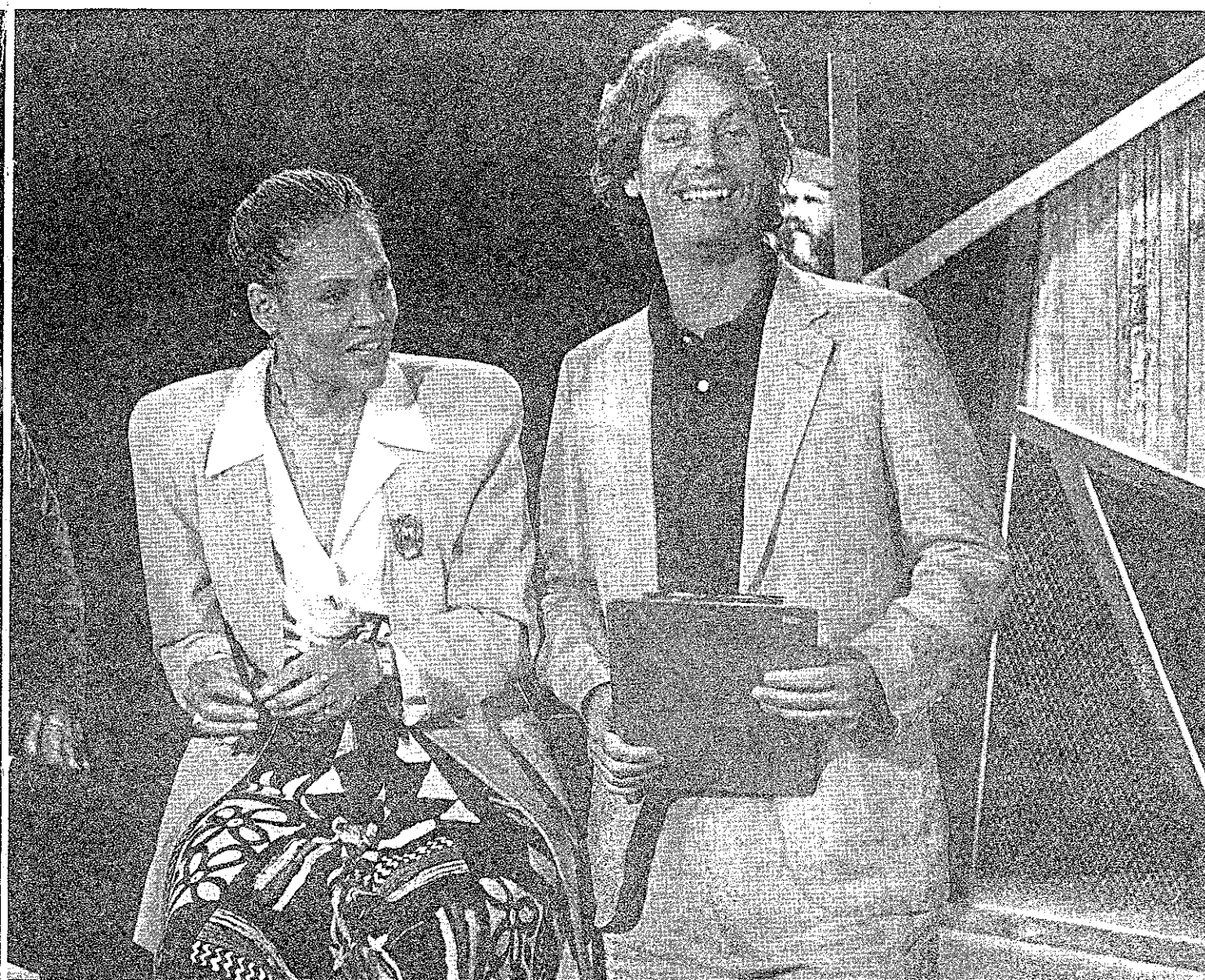
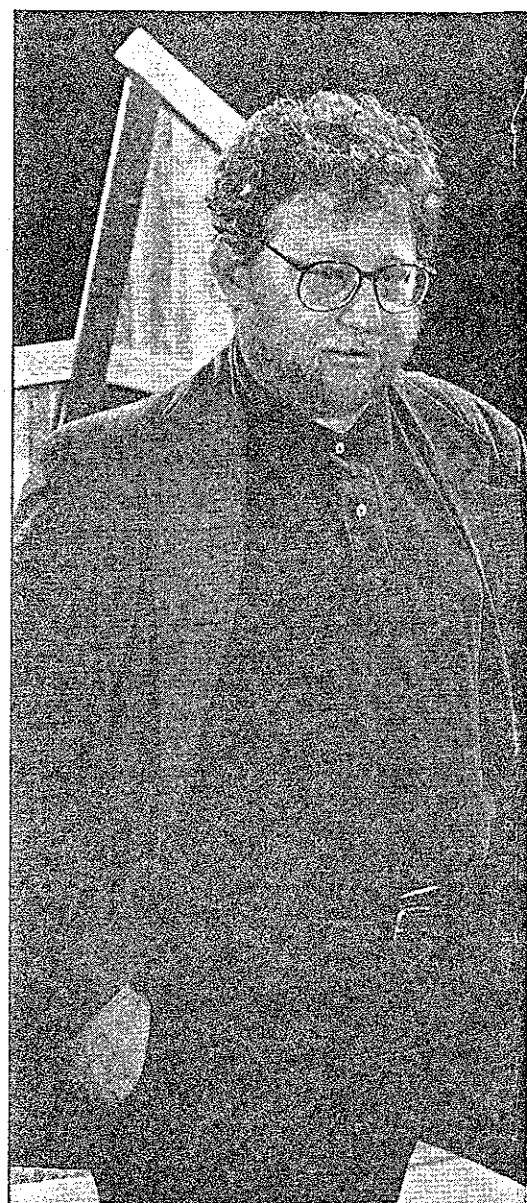
Nazis screaming obscenities about their twin scapegoats, gypsies and Jews. We see an aging skinhead warming up the crowd for a rising nationalist politician, then move on to a counter-demonstration, and are left with the image of a newly democratic country that could tip either way.

From Kosovo, in another diary, comes an image of long grass blowing on the field where the Serbs lost to the Turks 600 years ago, the historic battle that nationalists used to inspire Serbians all over the former Yugoslavia to dreams of a new national destiny and, ultimately, to ethnic cleansing. Kosovo — an autonomous province in the former Yugoslavia, now the place where it is feared that the Balkan conflict could ignite a wider war — is 90 percent Albanian. But the Serbs have been transferring power and property from Albanians to Serbs. “I get the feeling,” the author of the video diary tells us at the end of his piece, as his camera pans across Albanian children playing on a rusted car, “that [the Serbs] long to fight the battle of Kosovo once again, and this time to set the score right. But when that battle begins, they'll find not the Turkish soldiers of their myth, but Albanian villagers, struggling to survive.”

Rights & Wrongs turns to America, as well. Human rights officials interviewed on one broadcast, which ran in May, gave Bill Clinton poor grades for his performance on Bosnia and China, and for failing to shut down the Bush administration's HIV prison camp in Guantanamo Bay. Clinton, nonetheless, has promised *Rights & Wrongs* an interview in coming weeks.

The viewer who really counts is Jennifer Lawson, PBS's executive vice-president, National Programming and Promotion Services. In reforming its cumbersome system for setting a national programming schedule, PBS decided to invest a great deal of power in one person — Lawson. It is not an easy job, balancing, for example, the mandate of PBS to do serious, innovative public-interest programming against the desire to attract larger audiences. Or balancing the politics of left and right.

She must say no to programming, of course, a lot more often than she says



Danny Schechter, left, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, and Rory O'Connor on the set of *Rights & Wrongs*

yes. A yes means that the network feeds the show with its helpful imprimatur out to its 346 member stations. It can mean, Schechter and O'Connor say, ruefully, a larger audience, promotion, better time slots, and, often, help with funding. So far, PBS has said no to *Rights & Wrongs* half a dozen times. Human rights, Lawson has consistently told the two, is an “insufficient organizing principle” for a prime-time PBS series. O'Connor and Schechter have been just as consistent in failing to accept that reason. “What is a sufficient organizing principle?” Schechter counters. “Cooking? The stock market? Rebuilding a house?”

If Lawson is the type of programmer

who keeps a finger to the political winds, she might find a political reason for turning down *Rights & Wrongs*. Schechter and O'Connor's previous effort at a weekly public television series, *South Africa Now* (see *CJR*, January/February 1991), had many admirers, but it also drew critics who argued that some of the in-country expertise it relied on was in-country advocacy. Loudest of the critics was David Horowitz, '60s new leftist turned '80s neoconservative, whose Committee on Media Integrity took its critique to public station in Los Angeles, KCET. Horowitz, who now edits *COMINT*, a publication devoted to correcting the politics in public broadcasting, argues that the show saw things too simply, failing to appreciate Nelson Mandela's struggle with the radicals on his left and

F.W. de Klerk's struggle with the radicals on his right. “It was just a propaganda show,” he says, “and it presented itself as news.” KCET's initial response was to take the show off the air, but after a week of protests from supporters, *South Africa Now* went back on with a “point-of-view” label — a badge not worn by any other program on KCET's schedule, from *Firing Line* to *Wall Street Week*.

None of this might matter, and Horowitz hasn't even seen *Rights & Wrongs*, but it's worth noting that he's no fan of O'Connor and Schechter — “a pair of intellectual lowlives,” he says — and that he is now informally giving advice about public television to legislators, including an 800-pound political gorilla named Bob Dole. The senator, in turn, held up public television funding

last year because of what he perceives as a liberal bias in its programming. Horowitz, according to a reporter who has covered PBS for years, “is Bob Dole's brains on this subject,” and handed notes to the senator before his recent speech to the Public Radio Conference, in Washington. In the speech the senator said that taxpayers “have a right to balance, fairness, and access to their system. Unfortunately, some of the partisans have had their way for so long on the public airwaves that they are having a difficult time giving up something that isn't theirs in the first place....”

“We will still be watching and listening,” Dole concluded.

Lawson was unaware of this Horowitz-Dole connection, she says, and would not have given it any consid-

eration if she had been. In considering *Rights & Wrongs*, she adds, politics is not the question, nor is quality. Globalvision, she points out, has produced material for PBS in the past (a special on Nelson Mandela's release; three Rory O'Connor *Frontline* pieces last year — on BCCI, Saudi Arabia, and the "resurrection" of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon). "We're talking more of a logistical question than an editorial question."

Introducing a regular weekly show, Lawson says, requires "a great deal of consideration," as much, say, as introducing a regular columnist to a newspaper or magazine. New weekly shows have been launched, she notes, citing as an example *To the Contrary*, a PBS public affairs discussion show with female participants. But why should PBS get behind a program like *Rights & Wrongs*, she argues, when it already deals with human rights issues on *The MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour* and on specials on *Frontline* and *P.O.V.*

"I think viewers care about these topics," Lawson continues. "But we prefer specials to a continuous series. Viewers are more attracted to the topic when it is clearly identified as a place and a focus, as opposed to the broad umbrella of a *Rights & Wrongs*."

Lawson concedes that she hasn't actually seen "that many" episodes of *Rights & Wrongs*. "I can't say how many episodes I've seen. I have to watch a lot of material here." It's not impossible that she could revisit the request, she says. Just unlikely.

"It would be almost obnoxious," says O'Connor, to go back, once again, to PBS. He is resigned to distributing *Rights & Wrongs* through the alternative American Program Service, which has distributed the show to public television network stations since April, and to continue pushing stations one at a time to run the show and to give it a decent time slot. Schechter, on the other hand, sounds as if he'd risk being obnoxious.

So does Charlayne Hunter-Gault, who is not exactly small potatoes at PBS. Known for leading *The MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour* on high-quality forays outside the Beltway, she is *Rights & Wrongs*'s big gun — lending it her considerable prestige not only



Human rights, says Jennifer Lawson of PBS, is an "insufficient organizing principle" for a prime-time series

as anchor, but also as fund-raiser and promoter, regularly firing off letters to potential funders and to PBS stations. And as one of the show's editors, she tries, among other things, to make sure it is never open to the kind of advocacy charges that could damage it. "I'm in here every week saying, 'We need another voice here, for balance' or 'No, we can't say this,'" says Hunter-Gault. "We do pretend to be objective. The program is not about advocacy; it's about looking at an issue through a certain prism."

Around the time Schechter and O'Connor approached her, she says, PBS had issued a call for new ideas for innovative programming, and she had been meeting with people who were trying to come up with something. "None of the ideas excited me; it seemed a terrible waste of an opportunity. But then Danny called me with *Rights & Wrongs*. I just jumped right up on top of that one. I was finishing their sentences before they could." Like O'Connor and Schechter, Hunter-Gault saw human rights as a way of looking at the post-cold-war world.

Occasionally she has done double duty — covering a story one way for *MacNeill/Lehrer*, another for *Rights & Wrongs*. This was the case in June, when she covered the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the first such conference in twenty-five years. For the *NewsHour*, Hunter-Gault led a debate about "universality" — the idea that human rights ought to apply equally to all U.N. members, an idea resisted by countries whose leaders claim that their culture or the newness of their democracies means they cannot be held to the same standards as others on such matters as press freedom or women's rights.

Then, for *Rights & Wrongs*, Hunter-Gault described the "upstairs-downstairs" nature of the conference.

Upstairs was the tortuously slow official debate. Downstairs, literally, was the raucous world of the "NGOs," the non-government organizations — from Amnesty International monitors to eloquent torture victims to fully costumed representatives of indigenous peoples. Downstairs they held demonstrations and impromptu debates, pushed their literature, and generally showed the energy of the worldwide human rights movement that had pushed the U.N. into holding the conference upstairs in the first place.

Hunter-Gault, who as a PBS employee is in something of a delicate position, nonetheless makes her feelings clear. "PBS had said it wanted programs that were exciting, that appealed to young people," she says, "and that were multicultural. Each week we have all the colors of the rainbow on our program. But I'm not saying run this program because it's got diversity. I'm saying run it because it's a goddamn good program that speaks to everything you articulate as a goal. It's solid, it's journalism, it's journalism with a heart."

She thinks the time to go back to PBS might be after Globalvision has raised a million dollars or more.

Close to a million, meanwhile, is about what *Rights & Wrongs* needs, with or without PBS, just to stay alive. So Schechter and O'Connor are beating the bushes for money. "It's the worst part of my job," O'Connor says, tossing his blue "bible," the *Funding Human Rights* directory, on his desk, scattering a stack of letters to organizations ranging from the Grateful Dead Foundation to the German Marshall Fund.

Schechter hates fund-raising too. Still, as a pitchman he's pretty good. He notes, as a selling point, that *Rights & Wrongs* has achieved an unusual world reach. It is aired on the Super Channel, owned by Marialina Marucci, an Italian businesswoman, which reaches some fifty million homes in Western and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — and is shown in those places in prime time. *Rights & Wrongs* may run Saturdays at 2:30 P.M. in Los Angeles or Tuesdays at 6:30 A.M. in Chicago, but it's on Mondays at 7:30 P.M. in London, 8:30 P.M. in Paris, and 9:30 P.M. in Budapest. Schechter likes to accentuate the positive. ♦

VARIETY

BUZZ

NOVEMBER 8, 1993

By J. MAX ROBINS

'RIGHTS AND WRONGS' AT SUPERCHANNEL?

As a rule, the pan-European program service SuperChannel does a weekly double-run of each edition of the newsmagazine "Rights and Wrongs," which airs in the States on PBS stations. But SuperChannel's new bosses at NBC scuttled the reprise of a recent "Rights and Wrongs" after viewing a show with a segment focusing on the Peacock web's parent company, General Electric.

What appears to have caused a problem on the Charlene Hunter-Gault hosted newsmag was a segment on the NAFTA treaty that dealt with allegations of employee abuse at a G.E. plant in Mexico. A woman who works in the plant blamed conditions there for her miscarriage. A human rights activist from the Friends Service organization commented that this is what happens at "the company that brings good things to life." There was a response in the piece from a G.E. spokesman saying that the woman's health was of prime concern to the company and that G.E. was covering her medical costs.

According to SuperChannel sources, when acting program director Suzette Knitl was informed about the G.E. segment, she nixed the show's second run. Wired hears that when NBC News honchos got word Stateside the segment had been deep-sixed, fearing censorship charges, they ordered SuperChannel to give it the second run. It has since been rescheduled.

Rights & Wrongs

Global human rights seemed like a perfect post-Cold War subject for PBS; so why did the network turn down this series?

by Maura Sheehy

This time, producers Danny Schechter and Rory O'Connor thought they had the perfect show for the Public Broadcasting System: *Rights & Wrongs*, a weekly newsmagazine covering human rights issues worldwide. This, they thought, was the perfect post-cold-war issue, and they had Charlayne Hunter-Gault, star of *The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*, as their anchorwoman. They had two former network producers running the show and money, both hip and establishment, from the Body Shop Foundation, the Aaron Diamond Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. And behind them were big names in the human rights community. For Globalvision, the independent television programming company founded by Mr. Schechter and Mr. O'Connor five years ago, this could be a ticket out of the constant hustle of independent television.

"We will cover issues that aren't a part of routine news coverage," said Ms. Hunter-Gault, explaining both the exquisite timeliness of a weekly program about human rights and its attraction for her as a journalist. "Post-cold war, how else are nations going to be judged? What other measures are there except how they treat their own people?"

But by the first week of April, PBS was still refusing to fund *Rights & Wrongs* or give it a place on the network schedule. In fact, the network didn't seem to want anything to do with the program. Being on PBS means more than 200 stations, a consistent time slot, promotion, funding and prestige. It also means that eventually the network takes over the colossal task of keeping the show going. Using "the back door," as the Globalvision duo called it, means signing up with an alternative distribution company, American Program Service, and giving the show to member stations for free. That means lobbying each station individually, it means the stations choose the time slot, it means endless fund raising, and it means having to lobby and fundraise all over again every 13 weeks.

After months of this kind of frantic hustling by Globalvision, *Rights & Wrongs* premiered on Saturday, April 10, on 85 public television stations across the country.

This article appeared in The New York Observer on April 12, 1993.

It will also appear on the Vision Network, a channel begun by mainstream churches, that reaches an additional audience of 19 million homes. This will be the second time down this same road for Globalvision. Five years ago, when South Africa declared emergency rule and a news blackout, Messrs. Schechter and O'Connor created *South Africa Now*, a weekly news show about politics and daily life in the apartheid state. Without any help from PBS, Globalvision produced and aired 156 broadcasts of the show. During those years, it was often a desperate struggle to keep going. Once they even convinced a part-time staff member, who happened to clean Ford Foundation president Franklin Thomas' apartment as her day job, to plant a *South Africa Now* tape in his VCR when they were lobbying Mr. Thomas for funding.

Both of Globalvision's principals were born to the alternative media and its whistle-blowing, muckraking, outsider-exposing-the-system identity. Mr. Schechter is still widely remembered for being "Danny Schechter the News Dissector" on Boston's top rock station, WBCN-FM, in the 70's. Mr. O'Connor got his start as a reporter at *The Real Paper*, a now-defunct Cambridge, Mass., alternative weekly. Both also moved on to do investigative journalism for magazines and television, eventually ending up as Emmy-winning network news producers—Mr. O'Connor at *48 Hours*, Mr. Schechter at *20/20*. And both quit their comfortable network jobs five years ago to found Globalvision because they felt, as Mr. Schechter recalled, "Surely we can do better. Does everything have to be formulaized, regurgitated, everything done for the two-second promo? Let's get some other voices, other realities."

Their strategy was to prove their investigative merit with *South Africa Now* and three *Frontline* documentaries (on the B.C.C.I. scandal, the Unification Church empire, and the secret military relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia), while staying afloat with more commercial work: electronic press kits, Public Service Announcements and image consulting. Always working the connections, they made sure that a corporate video they produced for the Body Shop also resulted in \$750,000 for *Rights & Wrongs*.

Yet they have remained preoccupied

with PBS, for two reasons. One, they don't want to be outsiders anymore. Sitting in his office, with an official letter from the South African government denying Globalvision access to the country in a frame on his wall, Mr. O'Connor explained, "We want to be a force in mainstream media. That's our plan for the 90's." The other reason is that it's hard for either of them, but especially Mr. Schechter, to pass up a good political fight.

And they are certain that PBS is slighting them for political reasons. Again and again, they have told the saga: As press restrictions were lifted in South Africa, Globalvision approached PBS to fund *Human Rights Now*, a proposed global approach to the issue, and were told that the public network didn't want an issue-oriented series—that human rights wasn't an "event." Later, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting turned down a funding proposal. Then Mr. O'Connor ran into C.P.B. official Don Marbury at a function, and Mr. Marbury invited him to resubmit the proposal.

Meanwhile, they sent PBS an hour-long pilot, and were told they needed a half-hour pilot in order to propose a half-hour show. So they made a half-hour pilot, submitted it, and were turned down again. After obtaining funding elsewhere, they went back to PBS to ask for a place on the network schedule. This time, they were told that *Rights & Wrongs* was "an insufficient organizing principle" for a weekly series.

Mystified by that explanation, they went back again, after they had secured limited distribution with A.P.S., to ask for additional help with distribution. Once more, they were turned down. Jennifer Lawson, the PBS executive vice president in charge of programming, said that she preferred to approach the question of human rights through specials. "But they haven't done any specials, and they haven't asked us to do any specials," said Mr. O'Connor.

The Globalvision executives are certainly not alone in wondering whether PBS is too timid—or too intimidated by conservative critics in Congress and at the grass-roots level—to program controversial political broadcasts. In recent days, the network announced that it would not air *The Panama Deception*, a film critical of the 1989 U.S. invasion that toppled Manuel Noriega, despite the fact that the film won the 1992 Academy Award for best documentary.

Regardless of their opinion of PBS, however, Mr. Schechter and Mr. O'Connor know they must avoid a fight with the network. *Rights & Wrongs* is their vehicle to the mainstream, with Ms. Hunter-Gault at the wheel. The foundations are paying, and the human rights community is watching closely. A certain decorum is advised.

Yet while one senses they don't mind hearing others let fly a couple of epithets against the PBS bureaucracy (like when



A SECRET WEAPON

A tiny home video camera can expose human rights abuses --and illuminate human rights issues--often in ways that the major news networks do not. RIGHTS & WRONGS, the global human rights television magazine, features footage and news you don't see elsewhere--every week. Anchored by award-winning correspondent CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT, this new series offers profiles, "inside-out" reports and cultural features that take a stand. Rights & Wrongs--Television with a conscience.



HUMAN RIGHTS TELEVISION

A Production of
GLOBAL
VISION

Funders: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur, Body Shop, Diamond foundations

Newsday critic Marvin Kitman referred to "Czarina Lawson") they won't rant. And Ms. Hunter-Gault, who is one of a handful of non-*Sesame Street* figures on the public network who is recognizable to the general public, is extremely concerned about not making waves. Speaking to this reporter about the new program, she pushed aside all questions about PBS: "I don't think I want to get into all of that. I don't want to talk about politics. I don't think that's very productive. We're looking forward to a time when we'll have the imprimatur of the PBS network."

But Ms. Lawson, speaking by telephone from an airplane, was definite. "The series is one that doesn't meet the schedule needs that PBS has," she said crisply. Is there any chance she'll change her mind? "I doubt it. It's reaching the same stations. But we are always open to reviewing a project."

Denying that PBS is avoiding financial or political risk by not supporting the program, she said, "On the contrary, people don't know whether a show is on PBS or the member stations." But that mindset is exactly what upsets independent producers like Globalvision. If *Rights & Wrongs* does well, PBS will get the credit; if it attracts criticism, PBS can disavow it by explaining that it's "not on the network."

A therapist might tell Globalvision to move on—that they will never get what they

want from this parent. PBS. To some extent, they have moved on. Both men speak excitedly of how, after only five years, they've got the new series, and a documentary deal with Fox, and the Lifetime Network seeking a Globalvision proposal for a weekly news show. They admit their problems with PBS may not be personal. "Just because [the show] feels, smells, sounds different, it creates anxiety [at the network]," Mr. Schechter confided.

But Globalvision needs *Rights & Wrongs* to be a win. Despite their past successes, the company is still an undercapitalized, shoestring operation that runs from one grant or contract to the next. Their offices at 49th Street and Broadway are next to a XXX-rated theater showing *Hot Hungry Mouth* in a building of squirrely little hallways. Behind a door with a sign that says "The Global Center" is the Rights & Wrongs staff of 11, working at all hours amid Amnesty International posters, scattered desks, frantically scribbled wall charts, and video fish swimming calmly across Macintosh screens.

At Globalvision, they call their approach "inside-out journalism," news without the usual filters, told by people on the ground, not by blow-dried correspondents. This approach is well suited to covering human rights, said Ms. Hunter-Gault. "By concentrating on this, we'll get in some of the

voices that don't get in for whatever reason, or that haven't been considered consistently."

Ingrid Arnesen, who is co-producing the new program along with former ABC news editor Howie Masters, quit CBS after the Gulf war. "We accepted censoring. It was a parody of journalism," she said. The challenge for *Rights & Wrongs*, she believes, is to delve into the issues ignored by network news. If a human rights story usually goes uncovered, then covering it may seem radical. "We'll broaden the definition of human rights," said Ms. Hunter-Gault. For example? "Inner-city schools," replied Ms. Arnesen. "Who's being deprived of an education? That's a right."

A "video diary" will be a weekly segment, in *Rights & Wrongs*, produced by giving videocameras to activists or plain citizens and asking them to document their lives. In the first show, some of the most arresting material shows footage of two Palestinian mothers teaching a toddler to "hit them with a stick, throw a stone at them," meaning the Israeli patrols.

Equally powerful is Ms. Hunter-Gault's interview with Elliott Abrams, the former Assistant Secretary for Human Rights in the Reagan State Department, in which she notes charges that the United States ignored abuses by the Salvadoran Government during the 80's. After Mr. Abrams calls it "a crazy charge," and says he never heard of such abuses from the embassy in San Salvador, the viewer is whisked to the National Security Archive, to see recently declassified cables from former Ambassador Deane Hinton—which contained notes of a meeting where right-wing Salvadoran leader Roberto d'Aubuisson planned the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Amulio Romero.

Charges of radicalism are nothing new for Globalvision thanks to David Horowitz, the left-wing author turned conservative ideologue. Ironically, he was once Mr. Schechter's editor at *Ramparts*, the muckraking radical magazine of the 60's. Having dueled with Mr. Horowitz over a near-cancellation of *South Africa Now* by KCET-TV in Los Angeles, after Mr. Horowitz charged that it was biased in favor of the African National Congress, Globalvision still feels a threat: Will *Rights & Wrongs* be Mr. Horowitz's next target?

Mr. Horowitz said he doesn't even know what Mr. Schechter's new program is about, and is looking forward to seeing it. As for Mr. Schechter, he dismisses critics like Mr. Horowitz. "The baggage of cold-war terminology and the Horowitz stuff is completely irrelevant to what America's talking about. That's the dead hand of the past." His message is simple: "I'm saying to PBS, to the public, watch us and you'll be surprised. This is television that can save lives." ■

DAILY NEWS

50¢

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Friday, March 31, 1995

Controversial PBS show has its 'Rights'

THE PUBLIC television establishment has always been nervous about the series "Rights & Wrongs," which begins its third season Sunday evening at 6 on Ch. 13.

"Rights & Wrongs" uses graphic footage and unambiguous rhetoric to report on the exercise and abuse of human rights worldwide, including right here at home.

This is problematic for PBS, which, contrary to overheated Republican disinformation, never has been comfortable with programs that take sides.

Even in the case of human rights, it's one thing to call attention to problems; it's another to point out problems and then say, "Truth Minister Joe Blow of Freedonia and his thugs are responsi-

ble for the murder and torture of hundreds of Freedonians."

"Rights & Wrongs" has no such qualms. The mission it has defined for itself is to cast a cold, clear light on human-rights abuses and those responsible for them, believing that such practices cannot endure public exposure indefinitely. In this, the program's staff, headed by executive producers Rory O'Connor and Danny Schechter, is positively zealous.

A former PBS official, asked to explain why "Rights & Wrongs" has never gotten a spot on the national schedule, offered a rationalization that since has been quoted often. Human rights, she declared, was not a sufficiently compelling organizing princi-

ple for a weekly series.

Nonsense. I think the bureaucrats simply have been freaked out about having to answer questions from politicians about turning over air time to what they see as a bunch of left-wing zealots out to embarrass the United States and complicate its foreign-policy entanglements.

In Sunday's season premiere, the program looks at the increase of intolerance and hate, which are the starting points for human rights abuses, in the United States, Los Angeles in particular. It also offers an interview with Cornel West, the controversial Harvard professor.

"Rights & Wrongs" is back in business. — Eric Mink

CONTACT: MERLE KAILAS
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(see attached broadcast schedule
for local times and stations)



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 1, 1995

RIGHTS & WRONGS RETURNS FOR THIRD SEASON HUMAN RIGHTS SERIES WITH CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT IS BACK

TOLERANCE IS THE FOCUS OF THE PREMIERE PROGRAM

RIGHTS & WRONGS, the weekly human rights TV news magazine anchored by **Charlayne Hunter-Gault**, returns to the air this week for a third twenty-six week season. The unique series offers global perspectives and diverse viewpoints not available anywhere else.

FOCUS--WEEK ONE: Since human rights abuses are more likely in the absence of tolerance, the premiere program examines the rising tide of intolerance in the United States. Hate crimes are at record levels. Civil rights are under attack. Racism and community conflict are escalating. Bias is back. What can--and should--be done?

DATELINE LOS ANGELES...in the aftermath of Proposition 187, the ballot initiative targeting illegal immigrants, a campaign to eliminate affirmative action is creating new tensions in California. Community activists and programs that promote tolerance--including the area's well-known Museum of Tolerance--are the focus of Segment One.

ALSO...Charlayne Hunter-Gault talks with controversial author and philosopher Cornel West about the origins and meaning of today's intolerance. What does West like most about "Brother Newt Gingrich?"

PLUS...A human rights hero. Paralyzed by a racist sniper's bullet at the height of Boston's busing crisis, Daryll Williams of "Project Teamwork" teaches today's children how to resolve conflict peacefully.

RIGHTS & WRONGS is seen throughout the United States on leading public television stations and many cable outlets, and well as in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Presented by WNET/13 in New York, the series is produced in association with the Independent Television Service with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Review copies of the premiere program are now available. Please call for interviews with Charlayne Hunter-Gault and the producers. Rights & Wrongs will also be Internet accessible through THE WELL.

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Current

April 3, 1995
Vol. XIV, No. 6



'Rights & Wrongs' season to emphasize U.S. topics

Returning this month to more than 25 PTV stations in major markets is *Rights & Wrongs*, the weekly human rights series anchored by Charlayne Hunter-Gault.

Having weathered its share of controversy in its three-season struggle to stay on the air, the Little Show That Could has slightly revised its editorial approach by developing thematic shows and pursuing more domestic human rights stories.

The season opener, for example, focuses on tolerance—"the notion being that without tolerance, human rights abuses flourish," explained Danny Schecter, executive producer.

The program travels to Los Angeles to examine the aftermath of Proposition 187, a ballot initiative approved by California voters that denies public benefits to illegal aliens, and to report on a new campaign to eliminate affirmative action. L.A.'s Museum of Tolerance is featured in this segment. The program also includes a Hunter-Gault interview with philosopher Cornel West, and a profile of a "human rights hero."

"We know that a lot of people feel that human rights is a bummer, a dreary body count of horror," acknowledged Schecter. The domestic emphasis will help show that "human rights is a challenge here for us, it's not just a concern for what happened over there." The series will continue to offer original reporting from around the world, including Rwanda, South Africa, Serbia, China and Brazil, he added.

Since its public spat with PBS over the network's refusal to distribute *Rights & Wrongs* last summer, Globalvision has won more support from the PTV system, Schecter reported. APS and presenting station WNET, New York, renewed their distribution agreement for the series, stations are beginning to schedule the show in more preferable time slots, and, most notably, the Independent Television Service joined the list of series funders by chipping in \$150,000. With ITVS backing, each episode will carry the CPB logo amongst its funding credits.

"At a time when fundraising has never been harder and the political climate never more hostile," said Schecter, "we've been able to keep the banner of human rights television flying."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 8, 1995

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(see attached broadcast schedule
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THIS WEEK ON RIGHTS & WRONGS: HUMAN RIGHTS TELEVISION

WITH CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT

CHILDREN & HUMAN RIGHTS

In the richest country on Earth, the President has declared we are "making war on children." They are the least powerful and most vulnerable of Americans, and their human rights are at risk. One of every four lives in poverty. Many more are neglected, abused, hungry or homeless. Most of these poor children in America are not black and do not live in cities. Most live in suburbs and rural areas -- sixty percent are white. In this edition, **Rights & Wrongs** turns its lens on the United States, with the stories of change-makers in two federally funded programs that work, one in Harlem, the other in Appalachia.

Each week, the series offers profiles, features, reports, and interviews on human rights themes. This week's focus: children and human rights. The issue -- what to do about it?

PRCFILES: Geoffrey Canada, Director of the Rheedlen Centers for Children & Families, which combats youth poverty in New York's devastated neighborhoods by providing quality preventive social services to children, families and their community institutions.

In Appalachia, **Rights & Wrongs** meets Charles Vance, a self-described "skinhead" whose life has been turned around through involvement in an innovative federally funded cultural organization called Appalshop.

INTERVIEW: America's leading children's advocate Marian Wright Edelman, founder and director of the Children's Defense Fund. "Investing in children is not a national luxury, or a national choice. It is a national necessity," she says. For more than thirty years, she has lobbied for America's children and is widely considered a voice of conscience.

"**RIGHTS & WRONGS**" offers global perspectives and diverse viewpoints not available elsewhere. Produced by Globalvision, Inc. in association with the Independent Television Service and WNET/ Channel 13 in New York, it airs nationwide and worldwide.

Review copies of the program are now available. Please call for interviews with Charlayne Hunter-Gault and the producers. **Rights & Wrongs** information will also be available to INTERNET users through THE WELL.

Upcoming Programs:

Brazil - Indigenous rights, human rights & the environment.

South Africa - Peace & Reconciliation

Rwanda - How can genocide be punished?

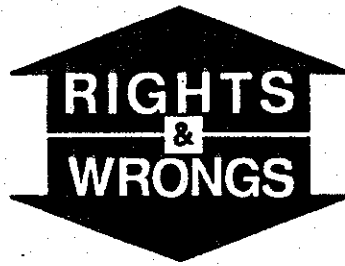
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 15, 1995



THIS WEEK ON

RIGHTS & WRONGS: HUMAN RIGHTS TELEVISION

WITH CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAND RIGHTS
Indigenous Peoples Fight for Survival

Land rights are central to human rights concerns. For native peoples all over the world, a continuing relationship to the land is essential to their cultural autonomy and ultimate survival.

In recent years, some indigenous land rights have been recognized - - but never without a struggle, and only after native people themselves have asserted their rights. In this edition, **Rights & Wrongs** presents a dramatic and intimate look at one such struggle: Geoffrey O'Connor's Academy Award-nominated story of the Waiapi tribe of Brazil.

COVER STORY: "At the Edge of Conquest" offers an inside look at the struggle of the Waiapi tribe, indigenous to the rainforest of Brazil, and its efforts to survive the encroachment of the outside world. It chronicles Chief Wai-Wai's (Why-Why) encounters with the so-called "civilized" world, and shows how he convinces the current Brazilian government to halt economic development that will diminish the size of his tribe's traditional homeland--and threaten its traditional way of life. Unlike many stories that portray indigenous people just as victims, this report shows how resourceful and committed many have become.

UPDATE: "At the Edge of Conquest" is a human rights success story. Chief Wai-Wai and his tribe gained legal title to their traditional lands--as a result of a unique collaboration between indigenous leaders, Brazilian human rights groups and the German government, which financed the establishment of clear boundaries around Waiapi territory. Increasingly, as the story of the Waiapi Indians shows, indigenous leaders from all over the world--including the Sami from the Arctic Rim, Native Hawaiians, and many others--now understand that their destiny can depend on far-off governments and international agencies. As a result, many have now become ambassadors for their people in foreign capitals.

"RIGHTS & WRONGS" offers global perspectives and diverse viewpoints not available elsewhere. Produced by Globalvision, Inc. in association with the Independent Television Service and WNET/ Channel 13 in New York, this non-profit weekly news magazine series airs nationwide and worldwide. Review copies of the program are now available. Please call for interviews with Charlayne Hunter-Gault and the producers. Rights & Wrongs information will also be available to INTERNET users through THE WELL.

Upcoming: reports focusing on. South Africa: Peace & Reconciliation; Pakistan: Child Labor in the carpet industry; and Rwanda: Can genocide be punished?

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APRIL 15, 1995
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ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ELECTIONS:

RIGHTS & WRONGS EXPLORES HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS

Going Back to Prison: a Reunion on Robben Island

One year ago, the world was stirred by the first non-racial elections in South Africa. What has the change meant for human rights? This week **RIGHTS & WRONGS: HUMAN RIGHTS TELEVISION**—the weekly public television news magazine anchored by Charlayne Hunter-Gault—offers a human rights update, chronicles one of the world's most unusual reunions, excerpts a critically acclaimed documentary and features an interview with Dr. Makaziwe Mandela (Nelson Mandela's eldest daughter.)

This week on **RIGHTS & WRONGS**:

COUNTDOWN TO FREEDOM: Ten Days that Changed South Africa:

an excerpt from a new Globalvision documentary film featuring an insider's view of Nelson Mandela's election. The 97 minute film, produced by Anant Singh and directed by Danny Schechter, goes behind-the-scenes to chronicle the end of white rule in Africa. Narrated by James Earl Jones and Alfre Woodard, this is the first public television preview. The full film is being screened on CINEMAX (HBO).

DEMOCRACY, YEAR ONE:

An update on South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, including a report on human rights progress, the creation of a new Constitutional Court, the reshaping of the police, and the beginning of a "Truth Commission." PLUS: Charlayne Hunter-Gault talks with Makaziwe Mandela about her country's rising expectations and scarce resources. And on a more personal level, Dr. Mandela unveils mixed emotions about her father's status, saying, "I've never been able to establish a father/daughter relationship because he came out of jail and was swallowed up in national issues. So he is actually not there..."

PRISONERS OF HOPE: A Return to Robben Island:

South Africa's most infamous political prison, Robben Island was home to Nelson Mandela and his colleagues for decades of enforced incarceration. Rights & Wrongs previews a new film about a recent reunion when more than a thousand former prisoners went back to the jail to confront their own past and hopes for the future. Produced with Anant Singh in South Africa, the film will be available in Fall 1995.

RIGHTS & WRONGS offers global perspectives and diverse viewpoints not available elsewhere. Produced by Globalvision, Inc. in association with the Independent Television Service and WNET/ Channel 13 in New York, it is aired nationwide and worldwide. Review copies of the program are now available. Please call for interviews with Charlayne Hunter-Gault and the producers. Rights & Wrongs information will also be available to INTERNET users through THE WELL.

Upcoming Programs: Rwanda - How can genocide be punished? Child Labor - last vestige of slavery. Health & Human Rights. Gender - the world prepares for Beijing.

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The New York Times

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 1995

Human Rights TV Series Transcends Politics

To the Editor:

In response to your television review (April 8) of "Rights and Wrongs: Human Rights Television," allow me to share our program's mission — minus the political labels.

In the post-cold war era, human rights issues are transforming our world. Adherence to the universal standards of human rights has become a key measure of all governments and leaders.

"Rights and Wrongs" uses these standards as a prism to examine a world in turmoil, and reports on the expanding human rights challenges that confront all nations — including ours.

In such a context, a mechanistic "right vs. left" standard no longer applies — if indeed it ever did. The protection of human rights — itself an inherently conservative concept — is neither right nor left, but cuts

across the political spectrum. I find it unfortunate that the debate about public television often seems to envelop our program — as when your reviewer dismissed it as "yet another leftish addition to already suspect public broadcasting."

We do not see ourselves as having any political bent. Nor do we think it is right to exclude people based on their political orientation.

Our goal is to present serious, intelligent and balanced journalism that, in the words of Edward R. Murrow, illuminates, inspires and educates. We will continue to try to meet that challenge despite the prevailing trends toward "infotainment," entertainment and sensationalism in television news.

We would hope that would be worthy of your critic's attention also. CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT
New York, April 12, 1995



For Immediate Release

A Human Rights Television Exclusive

**RIGHTS AND WRONGS TO FEATURE SARAJEVO FILMS
HAILED BY FILM FESTIVALS, REBUFFED BY NETWORKS**

Offering authentic "inside-out" perspectives

"A startling first-hand view...devastating to sit through, but intensely revealing and important."

--The New York Times, October 8, 1993

While Sarajevo struggles to resist a continuing bloody siege, SAGA, a local film company there, has been documenting this human rights tragedy with powerful "inside-out" perspectives, selected for this year's New York Film Festival. These films will also have an exclusive world television showing in two successive weeks on special editions of **Rights & Wrongs**, the weekly human rights public television series hosted by Charlayne Hunter-Gault. The programs will air in the first two weeks of November on many American public television stations and in 38 other countries. It is carried by Channels 13, 31, CUNY, and VISN Cable in New York.

The programs offer highlights of the films produced by SAGA as well as interviews with the film makers of Sarajevo and prominent Bosnian activists and artists, including Director Ademir Kenovic. They offer a chilling look at daily life, and include gripping reports of carnage in the streets, a video diary of a young woman who marries the corpse of a lover fallen in the defense of the city, and an interview with a trained killer who confesses to mass rapes and savage murders. There is also a segment of American writer Susan Sontag staging Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" and discussing its relevance. New York Times correspondent John Burns, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage from Sarajevo, offers commentary on the situation and the role of the SAGA film makers.

Advance copies of the films to be aired on **Rights & Wrongs** are available for review. To receive yours, call Steven Anderson at Globalvision: 212-246-0202.

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"RIGHTS & WRONGS is at the heart of our mission in public television. Besides, it's a fascinating series."

— WARD B. CHAMBERLIN, JR., MANAGING DIRECTOR, PROGRAMMING THIRTEEN • WNET, NEW YORK

"RIGHTS & WRONGS is something you don't get any place else — not just on public television, but anywhere. It's a strong addition to our schedule." — BILL YOUNG, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, KERA/KDTN, DALLAS

"RIGHTS & WRONGS is a wonderful series; one which our audience deserves to see."

— CLAUDINE MCGEE, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AND PUBLIC INFORMATION, MISSISSIPPI AUTHORITY FOR ETV

"Important voices are being heard in RIGHTS & WRONGS." — JACKIE KAIN, DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING, KCET, LOS ANGELES

"The only ongoing source of information on human rights; we've been carrying RIGHTS & WRONGS for three years."

— JAMES STEINBACH, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTION, WISCONSIN PUBLIC TELEVISION

RIGHTS

HUMAN RIGHTS—MORE THAN & A BLACK & WHITE ISSUE

WRONGS

"The producers and anchor Charlayne Hunter-Gault should be applauded for producing a series about human rights — a universal issue, yet one so poorly reported to American audiences."

— JAMES YEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ITVS

RIGHTS & WRONGS, anchored by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, is a production of Globalvision, Inc., presented by Thirteen • WNET, and distributed to public television through the American Program Service (APS). Funding for RIGHTS & WRONGS comes from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, George Soros and The Open Society Fund, and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by The Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The acclaimed series RIGHTS & WRONGS reports today's issues before tomorrow's headlines by talking to the people who live them.

"Important truth — more than anything else, that is what RIGHTS & WRONGS is about." — NY DAILY NEWS

Fourth season begins April 25, 1996 via APS Program Exchange. Some of the topics to be covered this season include *Children's Rights at Risk*, *Women's Rights Post-Beijing*, *Human Rights Heroes*, and *Peace: Conflict, Prevention, and Resolution*.

Join the more than 120 stations in the public television system in offering viewers the "rights" stuff. Show your viewers what the rest of the country will be talking about tomorrow. For more information on how RIGHTS & WRONGS can work for you, call Merle Kailas (212/246-0202).

EXPOSING THE WRONGS

Now into its second year of production in the United States, Globalvision's Rights & Wrongs is the first regular television series to address human rights issues on a global scale. From organised genocide in Rwanda and child labour in Pakistan, to immigration in the US itself, the series has never shied away from pointing the finger at the perpetrators of human rights abuses. Below, Moving Pictures interviewed producer Danny Schechter, one of Globalvision's founding members.

MP: What was the motivation for Rights & Wrongs?

DS: Globalvision was founded by "network refugees"- producers who left stations the like of CNN, CBS and ABC News to cover what isn't being covered on mainstream television. And - in the case of the USA - that's the rest of the world. We think that human rights is the principal post-Cold War challenge, and that a human rights series is urgently needed to present the voices of those who are struggling to secure their rights -

and are often marginalised or only treated as "victims and soundbites."

MP: Why make short magazine programmes?

DS: Magazine style journalism, we felt, can appeal to more segments of the audience, with a faster-paced and more multi-sided presentation - although many of our shows are segmented: they deal with one principal item. We believe in making series to be run week after week, rather than occasional one-off documentaries (although Globalvision, as a production company, does that too - so we are not absolutist on the

issue). We want to appeal to a wide audience.

MP: Human rights is a very broad subject. How do you decide what topics to tackle? And how do you gauge the importance of issues?

DS: We use several criteria to evaluate stories. We want to be topical, to be timely. We want to go beyond superficial news coverage. We seek to go places that others won't and offer perspectives that are often

TVE is now distributing three episodes of Rights and Wrongs for broadcast use in developing countries and non-broadcast use worldwide:

Child Labour: Despite the fact that virtually every country has now ratified international treaties banning the practice, there are still almost 200 million child labourers worldwide. Industrialised countries such as the USA, Germany, the UK and Japan benefit by purchasing products from the developing world, made by children working in abysmal conditions. This programme investigates child labour in Pakistan, and features 12-year old activist Iqbal Masih - tragically shot while the film was being completed.

Human Rights in Asia: Two recent anniversaries have served to revive the debate on human rights in Asia: the sixth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in China and the 20th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. This programme includes excerpts from two recent films exploring their history - *Moving the Mountain* and *From Hollywood to Hanoi* - and questions whether human rights violations continue in China and Vietnam.

Human Rights Progress in South Africa examines South Africa's attempts to become a model of human rights observance, and explores what progress it has made in the year following the first democratic elections. There are three major challenges, the programme claims, facing South Africa today: refining and replacing the constitution; overhauling the police and security forces; and bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to justice.



suppressed. We work closely with groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (see page 4) and are influenced by their well-regarded reports that usually only get minor pick-up by the rest of the media. We also cover the coverage of the human rights issues - in the hope that, by competing against the networks, we can encourage them to expand and improve their own coverage of human rights issues.

MP: Is mainstream television uncomfortable showing contentious human rights issues?

DS: Mainstream television is getting less and less interested in journalism. US analysts found that the murder trial of the former American football star O.J. Simpson got more coverage than Bosnia, the Oklahoma bombing and Haiti combined. Perhaps that's why I am writing a book called *The More You Watch, The Less You Know*. But mainstream television programmes seem to be uncomfortable covering many important issues. American public television - famous for its timidity and kow-towing to power - ruled, in 1994, that "human rights is not a sufficient organising principle for a TV series" - and wouldn't distribute Rights & Wrongs nationally, even though over 100 local PBS stations opted to carry it.

MP: When you're in the editing room, do you find you have to hold back to avoid making some episodes too hard-hitting - like the Rwanda footage or Haiti?

DS: We try to make all of our programs hard-hitting, but not in the same way that the networks do with their "bang bang" footage. We show our share of gore because it's there, and needs to be shown - but we try to do a better job of contextualizing footage and explaining what's going on. We

do have footage that's so gross it can be numbing - but we don't avoid reality.

MP: When you've covered detailed gratuitous human rights violations in some programmes, you then seem to deliberately go on to show the lighter, happier side of stories. Your programme on Rwanda, again, is just one example. Does this serve to reconfirm faith in humanity, or is it just that US directors don't like to leave viewers on a downbeat note?

DS: We've been trying to go beyond just detailing abuses to show the people who are working - often at great risk and with great courage - to do something about it. In Rwanda there was a powerful story, we thought, of people trying to put their lives back together. You could see the pain. It was certainly more "up" in tone than just covering the genocide - but it added texture to the coverage. We want viewers to meet people - human beings - not just categories and mobs We're also interested in how conflicts can be resolved and prevented, not just intensified. In Rwanda, as we reported, the human rights abuses were not gratuitous but actually planned: ethnic terror, used for political purposes.

MP: In the China programme, you gave the Chinese government the right of reply. Is this a conscious effort to hear both sides of the story?

DS: We do want to confront and challenge all sides of controversies - including representatives of repressive regimes. Usually human rights abusers will not grant interviews, but we try. This doesn't mean we believe there are two sides of every story - as there are usually more. But, yes, we do aspire to balance, but not in a mechanical way. For example we don't believe you have to give equal time to torturers - along the lines of "And how do you feel, Mr. Hitler?"

MP: Are human rights fashionable?

DS: Human rights are fashionable in some circles, sure - but we would like to find out where they are to see if they could ease our perennial funding crises! Yes, it is a trendy subject to some, but then there are dilettantes all over. What we have been

impressed with is how many dedicated and sincere human rights activists there are.

MP: Is there anything your viewers can do to change things?

DS: Yes, we want people to try to change things. And we celebrate human rights heroes as a way of showcasing role models. Believe it or not, this has led to a snide comment in the New York Times that we have a "pro-victim" bias. Which makes you wonder - what's the antithesis?

MP: But if we all respected each others' human rights, surely you'd be out of a job?

DS: Great, we'd like to be out of this job. Before we started making Rights & Wrongs, we produced an award-winning series called South Africa Now about the fight against apartheid. When media censorship in South Africa eased, we moved on to other human rights issues - hence Rights & Wrongs. So please, broadcasters, carry the show and put us out of work. Nothing would please us more.

Rights and Wrongs goes beyond the abuse to show people rebuilding their lives.

