

# TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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## A letter from the PUBLISHER

*James R. Shepley*

FOR British Artist Gerald Scarfe, this week's cover assignment offered an unusual challenge. TV commercials, he decided, called for something more than the exercise of his satirical pen; nor did one of his papier-mâché cartoon sculptures, which had served so well for the Beatles (TIME cover, Sept. 22) and John Kenneth Galbraith (TIME cover, Feb. 16) seem quite right for this subject. Scarfe closeted himself in a New York hotel room for more than a week, watching TV day in, day out—concentrating on the commercials and ignoring the programs.

With TV spots before his eyes and sponsors' pleas ringing in his ears, Scarfe finally turned off the tube and sought the relative quiet of our editorial offices. There he converted a conference room into a bizarre workshop. The staff watched with growing curiosity as he collected an improbable mess of dismembered store-window mannequins, overturned cornflakes boxes, scattered cigarettes and disarrayed lingerie, and began to stuff it all into a gutted TV set. With hammer and saw, glue and plaster, Scarfe concocted a many-armed "assemblage." For a final fillip, he managed to attach a serving of spaghetti—which was no mean trick, since the soft strands kept slithering off the plate under the hot photographic lights.

The cover assemblage completed, Scarfe was delighted to turn back to more familiar artistic tools and go to work on the cartoons that illustrate the story.

Unlike Scarfe, Associate Editor Ray Kennedy, who wrote the cover story, figured he was all too familiar with TV commercials. One set glows



SCARFE AT WORK

constantly in his office; three others sound off steadily in his Manhattan apartment, to the delight of his six children. What Kennedy and Senior Editor Jesse Birnbaum wanted was an expert appraisal of what spots should be concentrated on. That appraisal was supplied by Reporter Peter Borrelli and Researcher Sandra Burton after endless hours spent scanning reel after reel of nothing but commercials recorded through the past 20 years.

Map and Chart Researchers Claire Barnett and Nina Wilson put in an equally painstaking few weeks collecting the necessary statistics for the commercial time chart that runs along with the cover story. TV networks would not release programming logs, so the girls had to spell each other as they monitored a complete three-network "commercial day." Everywhere they went—to the office, to parties, and through all their household chores—they carried their stopwatches with them. One or the other of them was never far from the sight and sound of a TV set. "The hardest part was learning to 'tune in' the commercials after tuning them out for so many years," says Claire. "Now it's all I can do to miss the message even when I want to."

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT S. CRANDALL

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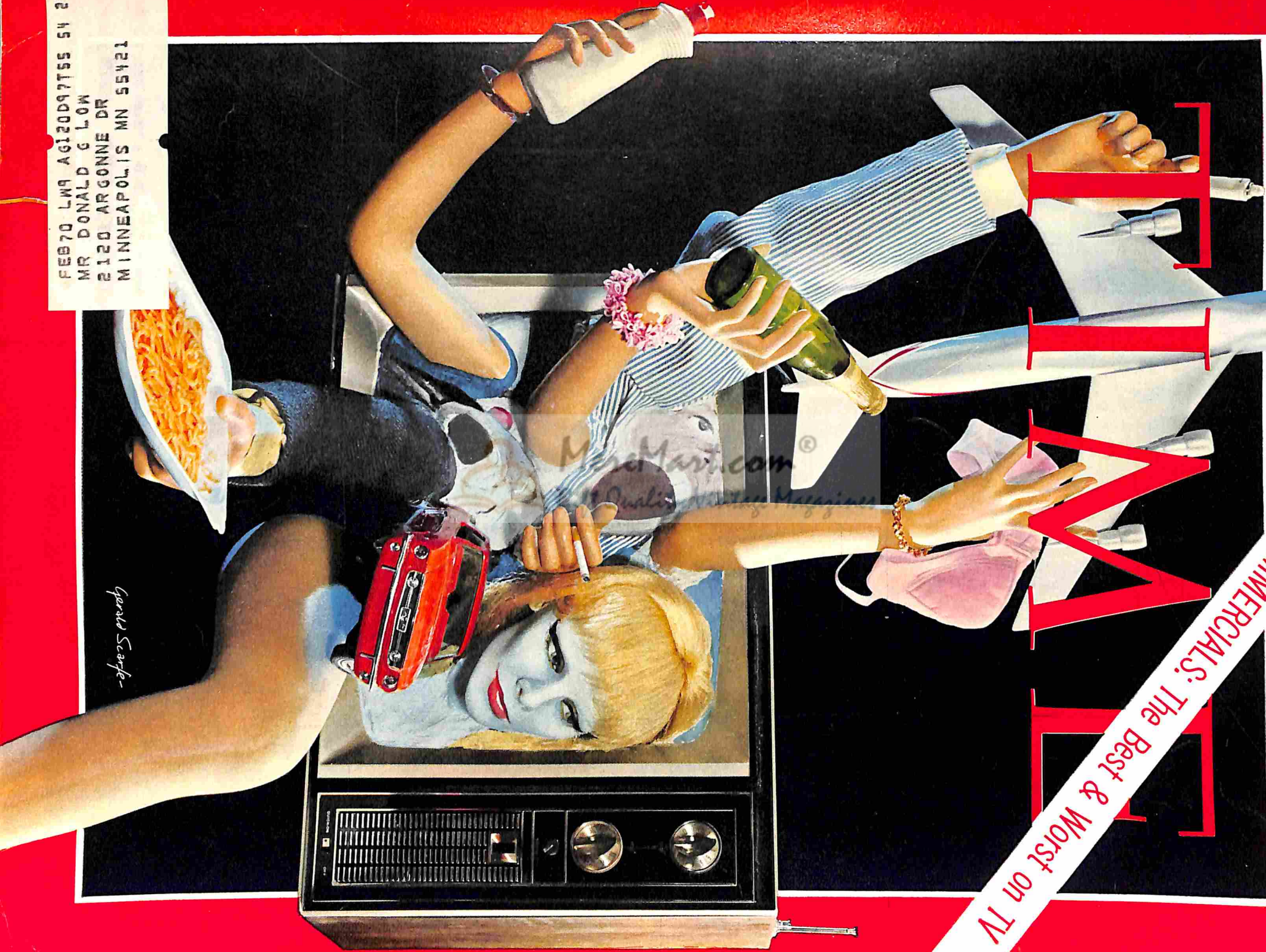


FIFTY CENTS

JULY 12, 1968

COMMERCIALS: The Best & Worst on TV

Worst



McMurry.com  
Quality... by Design

Garrett Scarfe

FEB70 LWA AG120D97T55 54 21  
MR DONALD G LOW  
2120 ARGONNE DR  
MINNEAPOLIS MN 55421