

**Memo to
A Network
Programmer:
You Say
The Season's
A Bust?
Here's a
Guaranteed
Funny
Topical-Humor
Half-Hour
Winner!
By Jeff Greenfield**

TO: Bob Brenahan, Programing Vice-President
Transcontinental Broadcasting Company

FROM: Sid Conn, Executive Producer
Adirondack Television Productions

Dear Bob:

I was going to wait until our lunch next Tuesday, but this can't-miss top-ten comedy concept is burning a hole in my typewriter, and I just had to get it off to you. Talk about your guaranteed funny topical-humor half-hour winner! It's every programmer's dream: Norman Lear without all that social conscience.

I call the show "Patty" (right away you see how it fits in with all the other comedy winners—"Rhoda," "Phyllis," "Maude"). She's an heiress to a multi-million-dollar fortune—but with a twist that will send your ad rates right through the roof. Before Patty's grandfather died, he put a condition in his will that his grandchildren had to conduct themselves "like well-refined ladies and gentlemen." If they didn't, they and their parents would lose everything, and all the money would go to charity. (It was his way of controlling his kids through their kids.)

Naturally, Patty's parents are forever concerned with her conduct, because she is under the watchful eye of the estate's executor, J. Edson Featherfudd, an incredibly pompous, stuffy bank official who is forever snooping around, trying to catch Patty violating her grandfather's will. (I see a Franklin Pangborn type in the role—you know, severe suits, homburg, boutonniere, cane.) Patty's mom—a younger Margaret Hamilton—and dad—Fred MacMurray—are after her to wear pearls with her dresses, carry a handbag, the works.

But Patty—Sandy Duncan, maybe?—is a real free spirit. She's taken up with a gang of happy-go-lucky, free-spirited kids, who are into (that's how the kids talk today, Bob—"into") a barrelful of laugh-loaded pranks, like holding up banks and kidnapping rich people to raise money. Now I know this may sound touchy, but I think we can get around the controversy two ways. First, the things they raise money for are really harmless—a new hospital for pets, street lights in poor neighborhoods, flowers for vets, you know, safe stuff. Second, all the kids Patty "hangs out" with are really appealing. People like David Cassidy, Mason Reese, and for the blacks, somebody like Jimmie ("J.J.") Walker from "Good Times."

As I see it, Bob, you've got 25 years' worth of surefire comic tradition behind you. You have the zany farce possibilities of "I Love Lucy" and "My Little Margie" as Patty tries to hide her wacky, zany friends from her parents, and especially from J. Edson Featherfudd. And you also have Patty trying to hide her wealth and social connections from her "far out" friends (that's the way the kids talk today, Bob). Plus, you have the central "Mary Tyler Moore" quality of funny characters moving in and out of our heroine's life.

Bob, believe me when I sincerely say I think this show cannot miss. Family hour, lousy time-slots, you name the challenge, we'll meet it. Just imagine this plot for the pilot episode:

Patty's friends have gone to hold up a bank. And Patty agrees to meet them there and help out—say, by holding a Thompson submachine gun on the tellers, or some other zany escapade. Just as she's about to leave, she gets a call from Featherfudd, telling her he's going to the same bank to sign some papers, and she'd better show up if she knows what's good for her.

Well, just imagine the 26 minutes of hilarity that follow. Patty shows up in dark glasses and a wig, and has to explain to her friends that it's a sorority initiation, or something like that. Then, in comes Featherfudd. So Patty makes some excuse about checking the alarm system, shucks off her wig, glasses, and blue jeans, and shows up all well-dressed and demure, pulling Featherfudd into a private office. Then she sticks him in there, changes costume, rejoins her friends with some lame excuse—well, you get the idea. A regular "Charlie's Aunt" without the drag overtones that could hurt us in the family hour.

The beauty part of all this, Bob, is that with the kind of dough our heroine has, she can do just about anything. She can drive cross-country with her friends, rent townhouses in New York and farmhouses in Pennsylvania, always leading this frantic, madcap, endlessly funny double-life.

All of us here are thrilled with the concept, Bob, so if you agree, why not start the wheels rolling and come up with a little development dough, and six months from now we'll both be riding our way to the top of the Nielsens. Oh, just to show you how far along we are, here's the proposed theme song:

"She's a mixed-up, madcap, multi-million-dollar girl—
"Patty!
"With a way of life that's got her parents in a whirl
"Patty!
"One day she's a Junior Leaguer with dresses made of lace,
"Next day she's a freedom fighter with a mask upon her face!
"Patty!
"She's a first-rate third-world devil-angel divine,
"And one day I'll make that crazy Patty-cake mine!"

Please don't blow this one, Bob. You know how I'd hate to see someone take a topical concept like this and run with it without any semblance of good taste.

Best, Sid