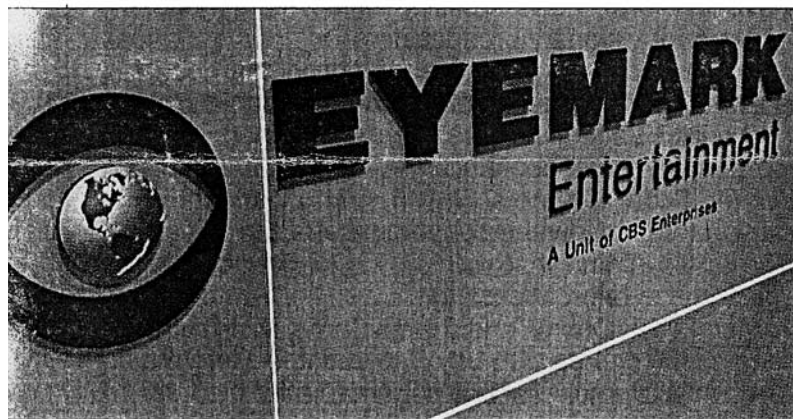


### Windows of opportunity?



Eyemark plans to revive 'P.M. Magazine.'

Syndicators smell opportunity in access in fall 1998 because renewals are due and ratings for first-run strips are down almost across the board. But this year's convention also provided evidence that in syndication, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

*PM Magazine* is the latest familiar name and format to be pulled out of retirement for syndication. Warner Bros. confirmed last week that its revival of *The People's Court* is a firm go for next fall. Saban Entertainment is banking on the enduring appeal of one of TV's earliest children's franchises with *The All-New Captain Kangaroo*.

Station sources say Eyemark decided to move forward with plans to resurrect *PM Magazine* after floating the idea to a handful of buyers. *PM Magazine*'s re-entry could complicate the picture for Paramount's *Hard Copy* and DreamWorks Television's efforts to launch the Chung/Povich project.

The CBS O&Os are understood to be considering replacing *Hard Copy* with *PM Magazine* as the prime access lead-in to *Entertainment Tonight*. Both *Hard Copy* and *ET*, which cost the CBS O&Os an estimated \$30 million-\$40 million per year, are due for renewals on the group in mid-1998.

At the same time, Paramount is grooming its freshman reality strip *Real TV* as a new companion for *ET* in some markets. As evidenced by the WCBS-TV arrangement, Paramount is shifting its focus on *Hard Copy* from access to early fringe, where the show has a history of performing well as a news lead-in in Chicago and other key markets.

For DreamWorks, the prospect of *PM Magazine* coming back on the CBS stations narrows the list of potential distribution partners for the show. A well-placed source says Eyemark passed on the opportunity to distribute the Chung/Povich project in meetings with DreamWorks officials at NATPE last week. Fox apparently has talked with DreamWorks about a possible network deal for the show.

Eyemark officials have been kicking around the idea of reviving *PM Magazine* ever since CBS's new syndication arm was formed last year in the wake of Westinghouse Electric Corp.'s 1996 acquisition of the broadcast giant. Eyemark absorbed the assets of Westinghouse's Group W Productions, which distributed *PM Magazine* (known as *Evening Magazine* on then-Group W stations) from 1976 to 1990.

In its heyday, *PM Magazine* was carried by about 100 stations nationwide. The show offered affiliates an innovative, flexible format for blending local reports with nationally oriented segments supplied by Group W and other affiliates. Ironically, the revised model could wind up airing in tandem on the CBS O&Os with the show that sparked *PM Magazine*'s slow demise in the early 1980s: *Entertainment Tonight*.