

SECOND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

TELEVISION CHRONICLES

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Also in this issue:

Magnum, p.i.

The Adventures of Tintin

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...and beyond*

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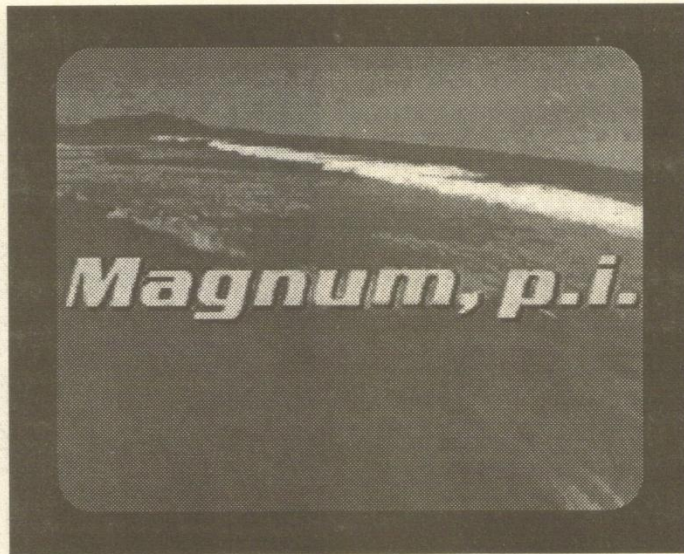
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Magnum, p.i. - 157 episodes, CBS

Credits:

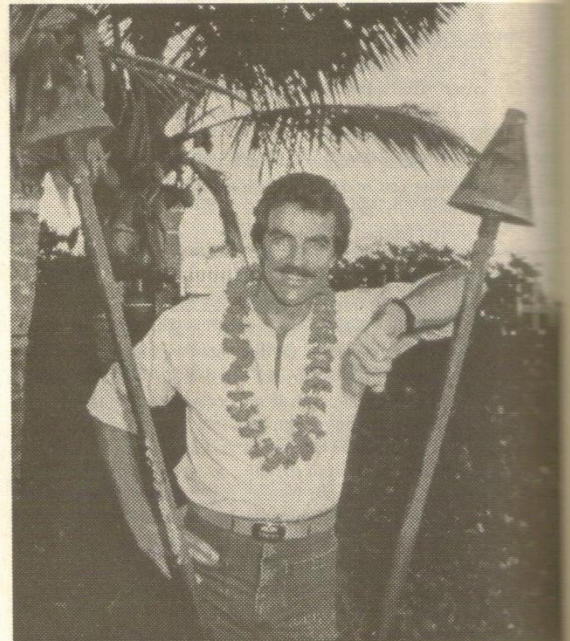
Created by Donald P. Bellisario and Glen A. Larson
 Executive Producers Donald P. Bellisario, Glen A. Larson, and
 Chas. Floyd Johnson

Regular Cast:

Thomas Sullivan Magnum III - Tom Selleck
 Jonathan Quayle Higgins - John Hillerman
 T.C. (Theodore Calvin) - Roger E. Mosley
 Rick (Orville Wilbur Wright) - Larry Manetti
 Agatha Chumley - Gillian Dobb (Seasons 3-8)

Semi-Regular:

Robin Masters - Orson Welles (voice)
 Mac Reynolds - Jeff Mackay (Seasons 1, 2, 5, 8)
 Lt. Tanaka - Kwan Hi Lim (Seasons 3-8)
 Lt. Maggie Poole - Jean Bruce Scott (Seasons 3, 4, 7, 8)
 Assistant D.A. Carol Baldwin (Seasons 4-8)
 Ice Pick (Francis Hofstetler) - Elisha Cook Jr. (Seasons 4-8)



Television had grown up by the 1970s. Color was everywhere and the audience was more sophisticated. They would no longer settle for phony-looking backlot action shows, shot in daylight with filters to make it look like (well, sort of) a night scene. Used to seeing the real thing on the big screen, audiences wanted it on the small.

Hawaiian Eye had been mostly a backlot show, complete with fake tapa cloth and styrofoam tikis. *Adventures in*

Paradise started on the 20th Century Fox backlot but eventually headed for the South Pacific, with Gardner McKay as a schooner captain on the high seas. Ten years later, *Hawaii Five-O* was filmed entirely in Hawaii. Locations were the reason it was there, and it used them to the fullest, capitalizing on the contrast between the Victorian excess of Iolani Palace and modern jet engines.

Universal Television became the standard bearer for dramatic episodic TV

in the mid-1960s. This was partly because Universal still had contract players and partly because as feature film production slowed from the hectic post-war pace, ever-more impressive producers and writers were lured to the lot and these people often turned to television.

Universal produced the first made-for-TV movies, and the TV-movie became a wonderful proving ground for pilots. Many of the early Universal TV-movies were crime and spy stories, and



The core *Magnum* ensemble: (Left to right) John Hillerman, Tom Selleck, Larry Manetti, and Roger E. Mosley.

many became series, including: *Ironside*, *Prescription: Murder* (*Columbo*), *Then Came Bronson*, *Dragnet*, *The D.A.: Murder One*, *McCloud: Who Killed Miss U.S.A.?*, *Dial Hot Line* (*Matt Lincoln*), *Alias Smith and Jones*, and *O'Hara, United States Treasury: Operation Cobra*.

A veteran of TV-movies, Tom Selleck, had made seven of these TV-movie/pilots by 1979. The previous year, Selleck had done a guest stint on *The Rockford Files* as super-detective Lance White. The oil-and-water combination of the noble, pristine and slightly pompous Lance White and Rockford that worked so well that CBS wanted to make a series with Selleck as a private eye. Selleck was engaging and ready to carry a series on his own. He had already played a cop in the 1977 NBC pilot *Bunco*, with Robert Urich; and an Army captain in CBS's *The Gypsy Warriors*, with James Whitmore, Jr. In 1979, CBS re-teamed Selleck with Whitmore as private eye Tom Boston in *Boston and Killbride*, but it didn't work.

So, the network went to Glen Larson, producer of *McCloud* and *Switch*, and asked him what he had. He gave them "Magnum," a script about "a James Bond private eye. An ex-CIA agent who lived on the private estate of an author named Robin Masters. Magnum lived in the guest house all by himself except for his killer Doberman and a roomful of fantastic" gadgets. Larson didn't want to proceed with the project and turned the script over to Don Bellisario. Bellisario had his own private eye pilot script, H.H. Flynn, and he combined the two to create *Magnum, p.i.* Bellisario says, "It was the first time a handsome hunk fell over his shoelaces. He made mistakes."

Hawaii Five-O was going off the air after twelve seasons of ruling Thursday nights. CBS persuaded Bellisario to set *Magnum* in Hawaii to make use of the *Five-O* production facilities built on Army land right behind Diamond Head. *Magnum* would also take over *Five-O*'s Thursday night timeslot.

The pilot was made in the spring of

1980 and got an order to go to series before it was even aired; but two things nearly derailed the show. Not only was Selleck ready to star in a TV series, Steven Spielberg thought he was ready to star as Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the director asked CBS to delay the show. CBS refused, and then the actors' strike hit on July 21, 1980, and everything was delayed. Thus, the show premiered on December 11, 1980, only two weeks before Christmas; an inauspicious time to begin anything on television, because regular series usually are in reruns or pre-empted. This break prevents viewers from developing the habit of watching a new show. But *Magnum* proved the exception; it was No. 14 for the year with an overall rating of 21.0.

For decades, CBS had failed to offer much competition to NBC's *Tonight Show* in late-night TV. In 1983, they put on *CBS Late Night*, rerunning their prime time shows including *Magnum*, *Simon & Simon*, *Trapper John, M.D.*, *Quincy*, and *Hart to Hart*, from the previous season. It was a success and so, for most of its

network run, *Magnum* was on twice a week.

Central to the *Magnum* ensemble of characters is Jonathan Quayle Higgins (played by John Hillerman), is the thorn in Magnum's side. The British major domo of the estate is an inveterate snob. Higgins' opinion of Magnum? "I don't like the way you live, I don't like the way you drive Robin's car and I don't like your friends."

Higgins' father was quite a rake and three different half brothers spring up over the years to cause Higgins embarrassment and grief. Higgins and his father were estranged for many years, but thanks to Magnum's surprising empathy, Higgins goes home at last, to a fine welcome.

Higgins tells boring war stories after having served Her Majesty in five conflicts over thirty five years. He was expelled from Sandhurst, a source of great embarrassment to this day. He is active in a great many charitable organizations, is managing director of the King Kameha-meha Club and is writing his memoir

T.C. (Theodore Calvin, played by Roger E. Mosley) is an All-American tight end from Grambling and was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. His good business sense and frugal ways (despite Magnum's endless "gas money" tab) have turned his Island Hoppers charter helicopter service into a thriving business. He is divorced, has two children, Melody and Bryant, and a girlfriend, Gloria.

Rick (Orville Wilbur Wright; played by Larry Manetti) is from Chicago, was a Marine Corps weapons specialist in Vietnam and gave up his own nightclub, Rick's Place, to manage the King Kamehameha Club. He has the widest circle of friends of all the guys, including underworld connections, and is invaluable in obtaining information from the street. He falls in love easily, and usually with the wrong women.

The pilot for *Magnum, p.i.* sets the tone beautifully for the series. It contains most of the show's signatures: Magnum's "little voice" (and voice-overs), his habit of hanging his head when frustrated, talking into the camera, his big-brother attitude toward women, his relationships with Higgins, Rick, T.C. and the dogs, and his all-out efforts to clear the name of

a friend. Thomas begins what will be an eight-year-long vocation: rescuing a beautiful young woman in deep trouble. Here, as will also become usual, he does not get romantically involved.

The scenery is fabulous and more lavishly displayed -- thanks to the helicopter shots -- than in any other show set in Hawaii. *Magnum's* Hawaii is glorified, idealized, and sanitized -- the Hawaii Visitors Bureau's version. The seediest *Magnum* ever got was Hotel Street, an actual Honolulu street which was a haven for sailors and hookers during earlier years, but which is now primarily known to residents as the daytime home of lei stands, with prices far below the ones at the airport; but the show usually used an alley in Waikiki or a slightly down-at-the-heels shopping block in Kaimuki for the location; and in this show, if it isn't seedy, it's lavish. Robin Masters' estate -- shown extensively and expansively in the first two seasons -- looked like an island itself. The bad guys frequently had digs just as impressive. Everyone drove great cars; Rick had a Mercedes, Higgins an Audi, Magnum the Ferrari and T.C. the helicopter. The bad guys escape to Maui or Kauai, and chasing them is pretty scenic, you have to admit. The pilot was so well-shot that several of its scenes remained in the opening credits for all eight years. There continued to be references to *Hawaii Five-O* in dialogue as if the special police unit was real and functioning in Hawaii.

Though Magnum never seems to have a dime, he runs in some pretty rarefied circles. The King Kamehameha Club is based on the world-famous Outrigger Canoe Club, which used to have a ramshackle clubhouse on Waikiki right next to the Moana Hotel. In the first season, the club is on the beach adjacent to Robin's Nest; the second year it moves to Old Pali Road and is lush and shrouded in expensive mist. The first season's club set was actually built for the show adjacent to the parking structure of the swank Kahala Hilton Hotel. When the noise from the parking lot made shooting difficult, the show moved to the Oahu Country Club in Nuuanu, but it was miles from the beach, and thereafter, standing sets were used for the interior.

Since Magnum has no office and usually meets clients in the Club, this sets up a have/have nots situation where his clients are either at ease in these surroundings or aren't. The endless stream of Robin's rich and influential friends popping in and out of Robin's Nest adds a bit of class to the proceedings.

Magnum's voice-overs were a wonderful gimmick lifted from the 1930s detective films. They often began, "I know what you're thinking..." It worked beautifully because it let us know what he was thinking and involved us in the process. It made it possible for us to learn about his family and childhood, what he really felt about Vietnam, and what he'd say if he was writing a book on



T.C. makes a point.

"How to Be a World-Class Private Investigator." He even spoke into the camera directly on rare occasions, somehow without losing the character or his credibility.

A few things from the pilot would fade with time. The use of the team ring that Magnum, T.C. and Rick wear -- a French croix -- as a graphic for the opening credits was dropped after the pilot, Rick sold his disco (Rick's Place) and became manager of the King Kamehameha Club, half-owned by Robin Masters and overseen by Higgins. Buxom stewardesses drift in and out of the estate during the first few episodes, but give way to more interesting guests over the years. The music for the show didn't settle in for some time, but by the tenth episode, Mike Post and Pete Carpenter had the show's theme and variations well under control. And the license plate on the Ferrari was changed from 5GE478 to "Robin 1."

Every episode has a wonderfully absurd secondary story which not only enhances the main story, but usually offers a medium for Higgins to display his essential humanity or Magnum his inherent probity. These "B" plots usually involve Higgins making elaborate preparations for a charity gala benefiting the Anglo-Hawaiian Society of Something-or-Other. Magnum drops the ball yet again, Higgins explodes, and eventually, everything works out.

Tom Selleck had spent a dozen years trying to get a break in television. In the beginning, he said, "All I ever sought as an actor was a steady job and *Magnum* is the first regular job I've had." But he found that one should be careful what one asks for. "No matter how I feel or how I look, there's going to be ten pages of script for me. It kind of assaults you every morning. To say it hasn't been an adjustment would be lying." But he also noted that it helped his movie career, "*High Road to China* did very well in the countries *Magnum* is seen in and it did best in the countries where *Magnum* does best. There's a direct relationship to my TV exposure." He's a bit amused that *Magnum* became an Hawaiian tourist attraction. "We find that one of the things on a tourist's agenda is to watch *Magnum* shoot, which is fine, and I'm glad. We get huge crowds."

Television Chronicles #9



Magnum and Mac (Jeff Mackay) enjoy a drink and the presence of an attractive young woman.

Selleck responded mid-series to people who suggested that he dump *Magnum* and do features. His answer? "Well, first, I have a contract. And second, I have a commitment -- if not to anyone else, then to my fellow actors. People say, 'Aren't you worried about being typecast?' I say, 'Of course I am! But what about my commitment?'"

Reflecting on being a leading man in a 1984 *TV Guide* feature, Selleck said, "All my lead characters -- O'Malley in *High Road*, and *Magnum* and Nick Lassiter -- the story revolves around them, and they're largely reactive. More often than not, I think, that's the function of a leading man, who in some ways represents the audience. He's acting through their eyes.

"One of the things I've found is that I'm not that good an actor. I'm only as good as the people I work with. Whatever they bring to the part, that's what I'm reacting to. I know a lot of actors that I've worked with who can work very well alone. I wish I was able to conjure up more in a scene with another person, where for some reason or other the scene wasn't working."

What did Selleck like most about *Magnum*?

"I don't always get the girl and I don't have to look macho."

Early in the second season, the *Magnum* series went from good to great

with the 2-hour *MEMORIES ARE FOREVER*. As *Magnum* himself says in one segment, "Vietnam stays awfully close to my heels." The show treats Vietnam as something to be proud of, be afraid of, have nightmares about, and most of all acknowledge as part of our common history. *Magnum, p.i.* wasn't *Apocalypse Now* or *Platoon*, but the horrors of operations against the Viet Cong or the hell of a POW camp were never glossed over. More than anything, it seemed as if Vietnam made *Magnum* more moral, compassionate, and vulnerable.

Vietnam also gave *Magnum* the love of his life and took her away. Twice. Michelle was his wife, and he believes her to be dead until he sees her one day in Honolulu. Their brief reunion and romantic idyll is interrupted by reality and she's gone again.

Michelle always haunts him, both when he thinks she's dead and when he knows she's alive but inaccessible. *Magnum* doesn't compare every woman to her, but she somehow stops him from giving himself totally, which answers the question of why *Magnum* didn't come on to all those stewardesses who hung around Robin's Nest the first couple of seasons.

Vietnam also plays a part in *THE LAST PAGE*, where a comrade of "Operation Chessboard" deals with the guilt of being the one who came home.

Higgins past is also somewhat revealed when his first half-brother shows up -- sort of -- in *THE ELMO ZILLER STORY*, as a bronc-busting tobacco-chewing rodeo rider.

Don Bellisario had more than *Magnum* on his mind during this season, having created a new series which premiered in the fall of 1982. *Tales of the Gold Monkey* was an Indiana Jones-type adventure series set in Bora Bora in 1938. Among its stars were Jeff Mackay and Marta DuBois from *Magnum*. It lasted one season.

Magnum's third season opened to strength with another intense Vietnam story, the 2-hour *DID YOU SEE THE SUNRISE?*, in which *Magnum's* pal and computer source MacReynolds is killed. The season also included a crossover show (*KI'N'S DON'T LIE*) with *Magnum's* new Thursday night partner, the slightly lighter P.I. show, *Simon & Simon*. The episode began on *Magnum* and ended on *Simon & Simon* (*EMERALDS AREN'T A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND*). Both shows were written and edited to stand alone in each series' syndication run. The conventions of the *Magnum, p.i.* series were firmly established by this time, and the season included such staples as another half brother for Higgins, another flashback show, a little romance, a lot of scenery and a bunch of car chases.

In the fourth year, Don Bellisario wrote the season opener -- a tour de force for Selleck -- *HOME FROM THE SEA*. Nearly the entire episode takes place with

Magnum stranded in a treacherous ocean current with a broken surf ski. *Magnum's* family is introduced, as are the values they gave him and the inspiration of his Naval lieutenant father (who was killed at Inchon in 1950) which gives him the fortitude to survive.

Eugene Roche makes the first of five appearances as "Saint Looey" gumshoe Luther P. Gillis in *LUTHER GILLIS: FILE #521*, and he and *Magnum* clash much the way Lance White and Jim Rockford clashed. They even have dueling voice-overs. After two seasons of talking about him, Rick's mob-connected friend, pseudo-uncle and mentor, Ice Pick, finally shows up in *DISTANT RELATIVE*, the fourth show. In other fourth season outings, Carol Burnett spends an episode (*REMBRANDT'S GIRL*) locked in a bank vault with *Magnum*, and Higgins gets a crack on the head and gets to spout Shakespeare for one hour (*THE CASE OF THE RED FACED THESPIAN*). Luther Gillis came back for an encore near the end of the season (*THE RETURN OF LUTHER GILLIS*), and the finale that year was a Rashomon-type story with a robbery at the King Kamehameha Club as seen by *Magnum, T.C.*, Rick and Higgins (*I WITNESS*).

Don Bellisario was less involved with *Magnum* by this time as he created yet another adventure series for CBS that year, *Airwolf*, the more successful of two series inspired by the feature film *Blue Thunder* (the other was a like-titled, direct adaptation of the film, but it lasted

only a half-season). The cast of *Airwolf* included Jean Bruce Scott, who had played Lt. Maggie Poole as a recurring character on *Magnum* since 1982, and Deborah Pratt, the then future (and now ex-) Mrs. Bellisario, who also played Gloria, T.C.'s girlfriend in several *Magnum* episodes. Lance LeGault ("Buck Green" on *Magnum*), provided the narration on *Airwolf*. The show ran for two seasons, then was reincarnated on USA cable with an entirely different cast.

If there was a season which did everything right, the fifth year was it. The characters unveil more of their souls than ever before. The season's two-part opener (*ECHOES OF THE MIND*) involves serious romances for both Higgins and *Magnum*. Lance White is reincarnated as the too-perfect Sebastian Sabre in *KISS OF THE SABRE*, and Selleck's talented wife guest stars in an effervescent episode, Professor Jonathan Higgins.

Luther Gillis re-visits the islands (*LUTHER GILLIS: FILE #001*), and this time everyone thought there was a possible spin-off series there and that *THE RETURN OF LUTHER GILLIS* was actually a pilot. However, it was the interplay between *Magnum* and Gillis which made the magic work and the idea was abandoned. Lt. MacReynolds, killed in *DID YOU SEE THE SUNRISE?* makes a surprise appearance in *MAC'S BACK*, but it isn't really Mac... or is it?

But the highlight of this or any other year was *ALL FOR ONE*. There are snippets of Vietnam action in many *Magnum* episodes, but this two-part story shows how these men fought, how they felt about it, the different ways men react to war, and ultimately, the human toll and humanity of the soldiers. It also showed the iron-clad basis for the friendship of *Magnum, T.C.* and Rick, with Higgins thoroughly initiated into the fraternity.

For the sixth season, cast and crew traded sunsets and rainbows for London fog at the end of shooting the 1984-85 season, to film a 2-hour special for the fall (*DÉJA VU*). During filming, Selleck was unable to stay at the Grosvenor House with the rest of the production staff, as the staid British hotel has a long-standing policy against housing actors. He stayed at the St. James's Club. Selleck, a true Anglophile, asked for this location. The splendid cast, including





Two of television's most eminent detectives join forces as Jessica Fletcher lends Magnum a hand in the crossover episode NOVEL CONNECTION, the resolution of which came in *Murder, She Wrote's* MAGNUM ON ICE episode.

Francesca Annis, gave this show a lot of class.

This year, Magnum and Higgins' relationship seems to show severe signs of wear and Magnum moves off the estate for a time, working as a hotel detective; then Higgins quits and leaves in disgrace. But there is no question that the high spot of the season is GOING HOME. Magnum returns to Tidewater, Virginia for the funeral of his beloved grandfather. His relationship with his mom (perfectly cast and masterfully played by Gwen Verdon) is nearly destroyed by his suspicions that his stepfather has sold a family heirloom to prop up his faltering business. A segment of the show was filmed at the recently com-

pleted Vietnam memorial in Washington, D.C., making this one of the most honestly emotional shows in the entire series.

Though it could be argued that perhaps Magnum only avoided romantic entanglements on Thursday nights, the way Perry Mason may have won only the cases he argued on Saturday nights, the growing legion of Tom Selleck fans wanted their hero to have some love life. The third show of the season, KONA WINDS, gave it to him and them, as Magnum has a torrid affair with a woman -- a married woman.

In WHO IS DON LUIS HIGGINS... AND WHY IS HE DOING THESE TERRIBLE THINGS TO ME?, Higgins' third half brother nearly kills the president of Costa

de Rosa during a chess championship, and Magnum gets on a horse on the Big Island to deal with some durned cattle rustlers.

Everyone was sure that the seventh year was the last season of *Magnum, Cosby* and network tampering with *Magnum's* time slot had eroded the ratings, plus all of the actors' contracts were up at the end of the year. Production costs had risen astronomically and renegotiation of the cast's salaries would mean a larger and larger deficit for Universal. Tom Selleck became a producer of the show this year and the planning began early. The company was going to Hong Kong to film an exotic, atmospheric season opener called THE SILK ROAD, but the studio and network wouldn't spring for the location expenses. The cast and crew were all in L.A., so that's where the new opening show was set.

In the episode titled simply L.A., Magnum falls in love and proposes marriage. The object of his intentions is lawyer Cynthia Farrell, but the car chases and shootouts he gets involved in are not conducive to rational decision-making, and she asks for more time to respond.

Favorite characters encored during the year. Unrepentant hooker Leslie Lang (THE HOTEL DICK) returned for the fourth episode, STRAIGHT AND NARROW. The fifth episode brought back four *Magnum* veterans: Tracy Spencer (LEGACY FROM A FRIEND), Luther Gillis, Jean Claude Fournier (THE MAN FROM MARSEILLES), and Gordon Katsumoto (THIS ISLAND ISN'T BIG ENOUGH). When Reuben Leder wrote the episode A.A.P.I., about a P.I. convention and Magnum getting an award, the staff originally planned to use famous TV private eyes as extras in the banquet scene. That proved to be too complicated and expensive, so they settled for Peter Falk, Telly Savalas and Karl Malden lookalikes. The episode bears a resemblance to a Lance White *Rockford Files*, which was an intentional homage. The inside joke in the episode -- Magnum constantly saying (but not believing) that the award isn't important -- was lifted from the *Rockford* episode NICE GUYS FINISH DEAD. The author of that episode (and *Rockford's* supervising producer), Stephen J. Cannell, has a cameo in A.A.P.I. as Ray Lemon, the



INFINITY AND JELLY DONUTS: Magnum's mother (Gwen Verdon) and Higgins maintain a bedside vigil as the detective hovers between life and death.

hotel detective.

Everyone wanted to bring in Jim Garner for a cameo as Rockford; however, Garner's acrimonious lawsuit against Universal (*The Rockford Files* was produced by Garner's production company, and he was entitled to a percentage of the profits. The suit was settled out of court in 1989 for a reported \$126 million) soured him on the studio to the point that even Tom and Charles couldn't talk him into walking onto a Universal set.

Magnum couldn't end without some kind of resolution of the relationship between Magnum and Michelle. Don Bellisario always dictated that Magnum and Michelle would not end up together, however, so a conventional happy ending was out. Bellisario and Selleck were not on good terms by this time, so Don's wife Deborah Pratt wrote it. This was a good way to get the Bellisario voice back into the series, particularly regarding such a sensitive storyline.

Never was the backstory of Magnum's war years so poignant as where Michelle was concerned, and Marta DuBois was the perfect bride-who-can't-be for Magnum; glossy, flawless, limpid and sensual -- and unattainable. *LITTLE GIRL WHO* (originally titled *LITTLE GIRL LOST*, and scheduled for the 85-86 season) is the direct sequel to *MEMORIES ARE FOREVER*. Michelle is still married to General Hue; there is still unrest in Vietnam; and again Magnum

finds her, only to lose her again. At any other time and place, this episode would have surely been a two-hour special (though syndication buyers hate two-parters). The story really is too complex for just one hour and plot holes are the result. Despite *Magnum's* healthy syndication sale, rising costs had ensured that pencils were very sharp in Universal's accounting office.

PAPER WAR is the ultimate battle between Higgins and Magnum, which culminates in the voicing of Magnum's most secret suspicion: that Higgins is Robin Masters.

Then, CBS' other top-ten sleuth, Jessica Fletcher, paid a visit to Hawaii. The story began on *Magnum* (*NOVEL CONNECTION*) and ended on *Murder, She Wrote* (*MAGNUM ON ICE*). There were a few problems with dual crews and dual directors and with Angela Lansbury's firm limit of 10-hour shooting days. When the last scene of the last day wasn't finished by her deadline, it had to be drastically rewritten. But in general, it all worked out quite smoothly.

Frank Sinatra had long flirted with the idea of doing the show. It finally happened this year, and it is an interesting, very dark episode (*LAURA*) about a retired New York cop (Sinatra) whose granddaughter is senselessly murdered.

Magnum's marriage proposal to L.A. lawyer Cynthia Farrell that opened the season was eventually turned down in

OUT OF SYNC.

Tom Selleck had always been adamant that Thomas Magnum would die at the end of the series, so there would not be a collection of reunion movies decades later with the four characters, wrinkled and old, cavorting around Hawaii. Hence the final episode of the season, *LIMBO*, where Magnum is critically wounded in a gun battle and which ended with a close-up on his heart monitor's flat line. CBS and Universal freaked. They flatly refused to let the episode go before the cameras. Negotiations resulted in the cast signing on for a limited eighth season. A new ending to *LIMBO* was shot just before the fall season began.

For the eighth season, the producers were faced with creating more episodes after most loose ends had been resolved, and as a result, the season doesn't have much direction. The first order of business was that Magnum had to be brought back to life. Selleck, producers Chris Abbott and Charles Johnson didn't want Magnum to jump up and go on after near-death, as TV heroes usually do. In *INFINITY AND JELLY DONUTS*, it is Higgins who brings him back. His recovery is long and painful, but he manages to expose the man who almost killed him.

After this shattering experience, the relationships of the *Magnum* characters change in many subtle ways. They all help Magnum recover and are genuinely concerned as he seems to grope for some direction in his life. In essence, they've all grown up and are drifting apart. Magnum's brush with death makes them each examine their own lives and mortality.

Lt. Tanaka is killed in *TIGER'S FAN*, and Magnum works feverishly to unravel the circumstances of his death, and to clear his name and reputation. An episode harkening back to *LEST WE FORGET* and *THE WOMAN ON THE BEACH* (*FOREVER IN TIME*) concerns a beautiful Hawaiian princess; and Carol Baldwin goes through the gut-wrenching discovery that her mother isn't her real mother in *THE LOVE THAT LIES*. Carol Burnett's character from *REMBRANDT'S GIRL* returns to drive Magnum nuts (*A GIRL NAMED SUE*); and a tongue-in-cheek parody of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* has Magnum duded up in leather jacket.

Indiana Jones hat and bullwhip (LEGEND OF THE LOST ART).

In all good drama, there is an event which changes the course of the story from then on. That event occurs in the eighth show, UNFINISHED BUSINESS. It's an episode of surprises for Magnum and the audience. Thomas thought he knew what had happened to Michelle and Lily Catherine, but he was wrong, and is given the most precious gift of his life.

The *Magnum, p.i.* finale (RESOLUTIONS) brought most of the regulars back. On a path toward the rest of his life, Magnum settles his accounts, pays his debts and makes sure his friends are taken care of.

The final episode was watched by 48% of the national television audience that night, and got a 32 rating. Thus ended the super-spectacular, big budget, explosion-and-car-crash action shows. Never again would there be such large casts, so many special effects, such luminous guest stars. Those things were not the main reasons for *Magnum's* popularity, but they made it seem richer, more exciting, and allowed a greater variety of storylines.

Magnum, p.i. attracted great guest stars right from the first. After all, not only did actors enjoy the Hawaiian location, the show was a hit.

In addition, the show used some of the best directors in Hollywood. Alan J. Levi rarely directs episodes of anything--he is one of the premiere pilot directors, yet he did numerous *Magnum* episodes. Former or current actors also directed many episodes of the show, including Jackie Cooper, Ray Danton, *Avengers*-stunt-coordinator-turned-director Ray Austin (who also appears in several shows), Ivan Dixon (*Hogan's Heroes*), and David Hemmings. *Magnum's* own Roger E. Mosley wrote and directed a couple of shows; and Stuart Margolin (*The Rockford Files*) and Robert Loggia each directed one.

Critics have been kind to *Magnum*:

"*Magnum* has always been an unusually well-produced detective series, one that has emphasized character as much as plot. Tom Magnum has been fully fleshed out over eight years, and fans of the series have come to feel an uncommon closeness, and even kinship, with

this character."

-- Bill Carter, *The Baltimore Sun*

"*Magnum, p.i.* never lost its sense of humor, which makes it sad to say goodbye."

-- Grey Joseph, *San Diego Tribune*

"*Magnum, p.i.* revised the image of the TV Viet vet...and took it upon itself to define America's post-Nam masculinity..."

-- J. Hoberman, *American Film*

"*Magnum* has long been one of the most underrated series on television--exceedingly well written, well acted, clever and witty and self-deprecating."

-- Steve Sonsky, *Miami Herald*

"For all its run, *Magnum* has been creative in the ways for which *Moonlighting* has captured headlines....But we who've been following it have seen it quietly surprise and delight the viewer with its unpredictability."

-- Janine Gressel, *Seattle Times & Post Intelligencer*

The year before *Magnum* came to an end, when CBS wouldn't go for a Hong Kong location because of the cost, Don Bellisario had an on-air commitment for 14 hours from NBC, and the show he proposed was an exciting action/adventure blending of *Romancing the Stone* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* called *The Ultimate Adventure Company*. The pilot was set in Peru and it was set in locales all over the world. It was a brilliant script but the whole concept was just too expensive. Until then, studios deficit-financed, which means they made shows that cost more than they earned. The difference was made up in the lucrative syndication market.

But that year, Universal's *Knight Rider* could not be sold into syndication (though it eventually was, the following year). The market was "saturated" with one-hour action shows; half-hours were easier to program. Universal immediately pulled the plug on anything with an excessive budget. *Simon & Simon* was renewed that year only because it was delivered for less money than the year before, and even took a reduced fee from

CBS --unheard of at the time. *Ultimate Adventure* never had a chance. NBC cancelled it less than a month before shooting was to begin. Bellisario still had his on-air commitment, and would eventually fill it with *Quantum Leap*, a new kind of backlot production.

So *Magnum* was over and so was the era of the larger-than-life action shows. But they live on in syndication. Whatever Don Bellisario, Tom Selleck, Chris Abbott, Charles Johnson and everyone else gave to *Magnum, p.i.*, it is an enduring legacy now being enjoyed by new generations. *Magnum's* syndication sale of over \$1.8 million per episode (from all U.S. TV stations) broke all records. It's doubtful it will ever be broken by a one-hour drama.

-- Sylvia Stoddard

Sylvia Stoddard is the author of the TV *Treasures* volumes on *Gilligan's Island* and *The Brady Bunch*. She is currently working on a book devoted to *Magnum, p.i.*, a series that she worked on in various capacities for three years. Sylvia wrote a *Magnum* episode which was never filmed because the final season was cut from 22 to 13 episodes. It was a major character arc story, which would have been a precursor to the final four episodes and was titled "Miles to Go."

