COPS & CRIMINALS: REPRESENTATIONS OF MASCULINITY IN
1970S CRIME TELEVISION

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Cops & Criminals: Representations of Masculinity in 1970s Crime Television

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To Melon, thank you for keeping me sane.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Cops & Criminals:
Representations of Masculinity in 1970s Crime Television
by
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Hawaii Five-O, Kojak, Columbo, McCloud, McMillan and Wife, The Streets of San Francisco, Barnaby Jones, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Bionic Woman, Ironside, Mannix, The F.B.I., Adam 12, and Barney Miller were just a few of the crime television shows that proliferated in the 1970s. This thesis examines how this widely consumed genre represented masculinity. As feminists gained a greater public voice during the decade, their ideals permeated the general consciousness. By challenging culturally accepted femininity, feminists called into question normative masculinity. At the same time, other social and political conditions of the 1970s, such as a feared urban crisis and rising police forces in cities, made crime television relevant to American audiences. This thesis deconstructs some of the most popular crime shows of the decade: Hawaii Five-O, Kojak, and Columbo. It argues that while some attempts were made to portray a more complex form of masculinity, the TV shows ultimately continued to construct a traditional gender hierarchy. From the hyper-masculine Lieutenant Kojak to the sly fox Lieutenant Columbo, men remained the individuals worthy of respect and emulation. Masculinity diversified, but its superiority to femininity remained unchanged. Representations of masculinity are understood through poststructural analysis, textual analysis of dialogue and interpersonal relationships, and visual analysis of character appearance and physicality. The 1970s opened with great promise for feminist success, but 1980s conservatism began to reverse feminist gains. However, backlash was not a 1980s creation. Gender was a contentious issue throughout the 1970s. Crime television provided one important medium for such a conversation to take place.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A group of Latin American revolutionaries break into the 72nd Battalion Armory, knock out the only guard, and begin to load their truck with rifles they “need for the revolution.”¹ As they rush to fill the truck, the Five-O arrives. All of the revolutionaries except their leader, Elpidio Acuna, escape. As many as ten police officers hide behind their squad cars, shooting into the armory at Acuna. Meanwhile, Detective Steve McGarrett drops into the building from the roof. After a brief standoff, McGarrett shoots Acuna in the leg and drags him out of the armory. Later, McGarrett visits Acuna in his hospital room to interrogate him. Acuna interrupts McGarrett to ask why he did not kill him when he had the chance, explaining, “you always kill the enemy.”² McGarrett tells Acuna “you have committed a crime Acuna. But I promise you will never leave Hawaii with the arms you stole.”³ By the end of the episode, McGarrett delivers his promise and captures Acuna and his pregnant wife. Given another opportunity to kill Acuna, McGarrett refuses and Acuna’s wife thanks McGarrett for allowing her husband to live. McGarrett responds that the “decision was easy. We don’t like to kill people.”⁴ Like every episode of Hawaii Five-O, “Savage Sunday” ends with McGarrett as the hero. He captured the criminal, saved Acuna’s wife from widowhood, and taught communist revolutionaries a lesson in humanity.

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
Crime television like *Hawaii Five-O* dominated airways in the 1970s. *Kojak, Columbo, McCloud, McMillan and Wife, The Streets of San Francisco, Barnaby Jones, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Bionic Woman, Ironside, Mannix, The F.B.I., Adam 12*, and *Barney Miller* are just a few examples of the most popular genre of the decade. Crime television’s popularity reflected a change in American culture from the 1960s to the 1970s. As liberal optimism turned to disillusionment, many Americans feared dangers to the community, city violence, and urban decay. Between an urban crisis, changing city demographics, and a rise in crime rates, police agencies dramatically increased in the 1970s. Because of these real life changes, Americans were keenly interested in police as a television genre. However, the genre also responded to feminist activism in the decade. As second-wave feminism gained momentum, crime television engaged in the feminist debate, working against the movement to maintain traditional gender roles.

This thesis examines how a genre largely focused upon men represented them. Idealized masculinity diversified in this period as different crime shows developed dramatically different characters. However, the gender hierarchy of men in power remained intact. This paper demonstrates how three of the most popular crime shows of the decade, *Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, and Columbo*, constructed masculinity in opposition to femininity and deviant masculinity. While each show developed its main character differently, all three leading men were created as worthy of emulation. Lieutenant Theodore Kojak was the most traditionally masculine of the three. As head of the New York City detective department, he commanded everyone, including his boss. Physically powerful and willing to break a few rules, Kojak always solved the crime. Detective Steve McGarrett ran the elite Five-O branch of the Hawaii Police Department. He only reported to the governor of Hawaii but shared the spotlight slightly more than Kojak. *Columbo* diverged from the extremely masculine pattern. Lieutenant Columbo was a homicide detective for the Los Angeles police department. Frumpy and continually underestimated, Columbo used his cunning and attention to detail to

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5 The fall prime time schedules for 1974-1976 included at least one (and as many as four) crime show for six days of the week.
solve the case. The three leading men of these shows lie on a spectrum of masculinities. However, they were all portrayed as superior to femininity. Even though they demonstrated their masculinity differently, all three remained rational and in control throughout each series. Unlike women, they could contain their emotions. When they did lose their temper, their emotions were justified by their righteousness. Ultimately, these three shows created three distinct leading men, highlighting their masculinity and therefore perpetuating a hegemonic masculinity wholly dependent upon power.

**POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Anti-feminist sentiment grew in the 1980s, in part because Americans consumed cultural products like crime television in the 1970s. To follow this development, an understanding of the political and social context that grew out of the 1960s is necessary. Two groups of female activists helped build the feminist movement in the 1960s. Liberal women and young members of the New Left both worked to reignite a “second-wave” of feminism. The older liberals created a change in political thought during the early 1960s. They were

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6 Second-wave feminism refers to the resurgence of feminist activism that took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Wave theory breaks feminism into three distinct phases. The first wave was active between the 1830s and early 1900s. First-wave feminists focused primarily on political equality, but also worked toward gaining economic equality and reproductive rights. Fighting for social, political, and economic equality, second-wave feminism built upon the successes of the first wave. The third wave, which emerged in the 1990s and continues today, works to correct the problems with the narrow scope of first and second-wave feminism. By focusing on micro-politics, third-wave feminism interrogates how intersectionality impacts women. Rather than the essentialist definitions of femininity that developed during the second wave (which were largely conceptualized by white, middle-class women), third-wave feminism understands womanhood in the context of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, gender identity, amongst other socially constructed categories. Of course, wave theory has its limitations. For example, it largely overstates the revolutionary nature of third-wave feminism. While wave theory constructs a white, middle class second wave, many women that did not fit that description were feminist activists prior to the third wave. Wave theory undermines their contributions. Further, labor feminists actively fought for women’s rights throughout the 1940s and 1950s, but their activism has been ignored largely because it did not resonate with the dominant liberal feminism during the second wave. For more information on non-white, non-middle-class feminism during and immediately proceeding the second wave see: Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2006); Benita Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America’s Second Wave* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kimberly Springer *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminists Organizations, 1968-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women’s Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2004).
responsible for pushing President Kennedy to order the 1961 Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, which found that women faced discrimination at all levels of society. Betty Friedan brought feminist consciousness to the minds of middle-class, white women with *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. She later co-founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966. In 1964, the Equal Pay Act took effect and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established because airline stewardesses fought against the employment rules that required them to be young and unmarried.7

While liberal feminists worked to change women’s legal status in the early 1960s, young women emerged out of the New Left as radical feminists. Mary King and Casey Harden wrote *Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo* when they left the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1965. While their memo only accounted for the sexism white women faced in SNCC, it created a conversation about sexism within the Civil Right’s Movement. After Students’ for a Democratic Society (SDS) belittled the products of the “Women’s Liberation Workshop” at the Summer 1967 SDS convention, many women left SDS and formed their own consciousness raising groups, which developed radical feminism. Groups like the Redstockings, Cell 16, The Feminists, and New York Radical Feminists “argued that women constituted a sex-class, that relations between women and men needed to be recast in political terms, and that gender rather than class was the primary contradiction.”8 While their specific goals differed, liberal and radical feminists successfully placed feminism in the general American consciousness by the 1970s.

Liberal feminism led the movement in the 1970s. Women’s studies programs developed in universities across the country. In 1972, Gloria Steinem and Letty Cottin Pogrebin founded *Ms.* magazine. That same year, Title IX passed, opening educational opportunities to women. The Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973 with *Roe v. Wade.*

Women also began to organize around single issues, creating rape crisis centers and battered women’s shelters. While feminism experienced some of its greatest successes in the 1970s, it also faced resistance. The media pitted women against each other and often trivialized feminist demands. President Nixon vetoed the Comprehensive Child Development Act and the Equal Rights Act failed ratification. Despite mixed reactions to feminism, the movement forced the public to question the established gender hierarchy. Popular culture, including television, had to respond.

The New Right reversed 1970s feminist gains in the following decade. Ronald Reagan’s election in 1980 symbolized the triumph of the New Right. His budget cuts disproportionately defunded programs and services for women, such as battered women’s shelters and the Office of Domestic Violence. The number of women in poverty increased, while the amount of money divorced men paid in child support decreased. Sexual violence rose, and many women lost access to birth control and abortion providers. While the New Right dominated the 1980s, conservative political power had been growing throughout the 1970s. In many ways, conservatives took on issues feminists popularized to fit their own agenda. For example, feminists worked to make it easier for victims of rape to prosecute their rapists. Conservatives took on this issue of rape but focused on how women increased their

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11 Ibid., 8-11.

12 While “conservative” can broadly imply anyone on the political right, I use conservative in this context to refer to New Right movement that began in the early 1960s, gained influence throughout the 1970s, and came into power with the election of President Reagan in 1980. I use the definition of conservative Lisa McGirr outlines in her book, _Suburban Warriors_. While her study focuses on Orange County, it has national implications. McGirr defines New Right conservatives as “united in their opposition to liberal ‘collectivism’… and normative conservatives opposed what they perceived to be a decline in the religiosity, morality, individual responsibility, and family authority---a decline, they argue, that went hand in hand with the growth of centralized federal power.” Conservatives “championed virulent anticommunism, celebrated laissez-faire capitalism, evoked staunch nationalism, and supported the use of the state to uphold law and order.” For more on the rise of conservative power in the United States see: Lisa McGirr, _Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right_ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 10-11.
risk of being raped by working outside the home.\textsuperscript{13} Similarly, feminists demanded better childcare so they could work. Conservatives capitalized on the concern for unsupervised children but instead of advocating for improved childcare services, they called for a return to a ‘traditional’ family structure.\textsuperscript{14} The news media helped increase fears for children by over-representing the risk of child pornography, sexual molestation, and pedophile rings.\textsuperscript{15} In addition to these issues, Americans experienced widespread disillusionment throughout the decade. They feared communism and terrorism, but after 1974, their trust in the government declined as a result of the Watergate scandal.\textsuperscript{16} This ambivalence ultimately led to a strengthening of state power.

While conservatives provided a powerful counter-balance to feminists in the 1970s, conservative power grew out of liberalism. Part of 1970s disillusionment stemmed from an America hyper-aware of its social problems. Even when the New Right took political power in the 1980s, America remained more democratic than it had ever been due to liberal activism. Conservatives used the disruptions of the 1960s and called for a return to “law and order” to win elections, but oppression did not increase in reaction to the New Left. Oppression by race, gender, and sexuality was “part of the warp and woof of Americanism, and the success of ‘the Sixties’ was to make visible and vocal what was largely unseen or ignored. Such visibility produces discomfort, and not only among the self-defined conservatives.”\textsuperscript{17} However, these fears ultimately contributed to the rise of the New Right, which allowed oppression to continue.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 13-14.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 22-23.
Liberalism increased the visibility of social problems, but urban riots throughout the decade made them scarier for Americans as they watched continued violence appear in the news. This constant reminder of city violence in the news cycle made addressing urban problems with force seems necessary. Beginning with Harlem in 1964, American cities erupted into racially charged violence throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. While most white middle-class Americans lived safely in the suburbs away from the riots, “extensive television coverage brought the reality of rebellion to the living rooms of Americans in even the most remote corners of the nation.”

Already concerned with an urban crisis based upon the problems associated with city growth like traffic and ineffective government, the public and politicians refocused on the “inner city.” As the middle-class increasingly fled the city, downtowns deteriorated in the late 1960s. Cities across the nation “struggled with declining infrastructure, increasing tax burdens, the departure of white residents and businesses, and escalating racial conflict.”

Downtown department stores downsized or closed as sales declined. Whites chose to go to the movies in the suburbs, so theaters in the city started to target young black audiences with pornography and violence. Similarly, “vacant downtown storefronts were attracting porn shops and sexually explicit peep shows.” Some office jobs entered cities, but the overwhelming trend saw business leave the cities. Manufacturing moved to the suburbs where assembly lines could sprawl across a single store, and corporate offices followed suit to court young housewives as secretaries. Cities felt abandoned. Jon C. Teaford perfectly

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20 Ibid., 273.


22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 130-132.
paints this dismal picture in The Metropolitan Revolution: “By the late 1960s and 1970s a wave of abandonment swept inner-city neighborhoods as even the poorest Americans shunned them. Landlords no longer made repairs, collected rents, or paid taxes, and vandals stripped structures of plumbing fixtures, piping, hardware and any other relic that could bring a few dollars. Once solid structures that earned lucrative rents were cast aside as worthless.”  

In his local study of Atlanta, White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism, Kevin M. Kruse demonstrates that white Americans did not simply move away from the city, but completely changed their political ideology. Rather than using violence and overt racism, whites moved from city centers and enforced segregation to defend their “rights, freedom and individualism.” Kruse concludes, “In the end, the ultimate success of white flight was the way in which it led whites away from the responsibility for the problems they had done much to create.”

The government responded to this urban crisis by creating the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1965. However, the national department created to combat urban problems failed because its leadership never agreed on how to solve city problems. Meanwhile, the news media bombarded Americans with violence, which concerned researchers at the time. A study conducted in the early 1970s compared news broadcasts in the United States to that in Canada, finding that even when reports of the Vietnam War were removed from consideration, US broadcasts had significantly more coverage of violence. Such attention to violence in the news perpetuated Americans’ concerns that their cities were

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25 Ibid., 132-133.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 258.
29 Pritchett, “Which Urban Crisis?” 266.
devolving into dilapidated centers for violence. Actual problems with urban decay, race riots, and media focus on violence throughout the 1960s created a culture keenly interested in police work.

As the 1960s closed, changing city demographics throughout the 1970s further contributed to an interest in crime and police. The economic distribution of cities changed dramatically in the 1970s. In a significant portion of American cities, mostly in the Sunbelt, the number of wealthy families increased, while the number of families in all other classes decreased. With the exception of New York City, where wages decreased for all classes, economic inequality expanded in the rest of American cities. The working-class and upper class grew while the middle-class declined.\(^{31}\) Meanwhile, social class increasingly segregated city neighborhoods. After watching the social upheavals in 1960s cities, the newly affluent moved away from lower income areas, creating dense populations of wealth and poverty. High concentrations of poverty exacerbated social problems associated with poverty because of the missing tax base.

While crime increased, fears of violence grew disproportionately to reality. As the 1970s opened, crime rates were high. The national murder rate doubled between 1962 and 1972.\(^{32}\) Between 1966 and 1970 the robbery rate also doubled.\(^{33}\) Meanwhile, drug use, particularly by young males, skyrocketed. Most dramatically, between 1963 and 1970, heroin use increased by a factor of ten in Boston and Atlanta.\(^{34}\) Their fears were validated by reality, but exasperated by segregation. The wealthy believed low-income areas were more threatening because they no longer interacted with people outside of their class and race, particularly when a city had a large black population.\(^{35}\) This created a situation where the

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\(^{32}\) Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, 135.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 136.

\(^{35}\) Massey and Eggers, “Spatial Concentration,” 308-313.
media could influence public opinion. As real experiences with the working-class declined, television’s power to inform their middle-class and affluent viewers expanded.

Sociologists of the time deployed conflict theory to make sense of how the change in city demographics helped grow metropolitan police forces in both size and strength. According to conflict theory, “control of crime and deviance proceeds in accord with the wishes of those with power who use this control to further their own narrow interests.” Essentially, police forces grow when those in power want them to. They target some crimes and ignore others based upon the will of the dominant group (white, affluent). This theory does not fully apply to the 1960s. However, police forces in the 1970s fit the conflict theory model. Crime actually increased in the decade, but crime rates did not determine police strength in a given city. Rather, cities with the highest economic inequality had the largest police forces. Police forces grew because the wealthier residents wanted to feel protected from working-class populations in their city. This trend only multiplied when the cities had high black populations, but high concentrations of non-black people of color did not affect the size of police forces.

The 1960s social upheavals made poverty and blackness seem even more threatening to wealthy white people than it had been before. As a result, the relative strength of police forces increased. Allocating more funding toward agencies to control their citizens, cities had fewer non-police public workers to help prevent social problems, perpetuating the demand for police. So, as Americans were concerned with crumbling cities, city police forces swelled. As the methods of control increased, so did prison populations. This highly segregated political culture perpetuated the belief that cities need powerful police departments to protect and control. Shows like Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, and Columbo


38 Jacobs, “Inequality and Police Strength,” 923.
sustained this opinion with their main characters. As protectors of the law, Kojak, McGarrett, and Columbo kept American cities safer from criminals who were represented as inherently bad people. These shows perpetuated police the importance of police force growth and increased strength by representing masculinity based upon power.

**HISTORIOGRAPHY**

Many studies address how the media represented women and its response to feminism, tracing the changes in representations of women in the media and television specifically. Most notably, Susan Douglas examines media ambivalence toward women. In contrast, Susan Faludi argues for anti-feminist backlash in the 1980s. While these studies, and others, are important to understanding the power of media representations of women, focusing exclusively on women poses a problem. Female roles can broaden, but if male roles remain constant, little changes. Both women and men need diverse representations to truly upset the gender hierarchy. It is therefore necessary to examine how the media represented men as well as women to evaluate the successes and failures of feminism in the 1970s. Some masculinity studies have begun to address how television responded to feminism. However, the field is vastly underdeveloped. Most scholars look at shows targeted toward women or the family. Few studies address representations in shows made specifically for a male audience, like crime television.

Histories of masculinity took shape in the early 1990s. In response to the development of women’s history, scholars began to reconceptualize men’s history. They began to think of men as men, rather than actors in politics and economics. While women’s history forced men to think about masculinity as a cultural construction, a burgeoning men’s movement did too. The men’s movement that developed in response to feminism called for a reclaiming of intrinsic masculinity. Robert Bly characterizes this movement in his 1990

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book, *Iron John*, which uses ancient stories to claim that all modern American men have “a large, primitive being covered with hair down to his feet” in their subconscious.\(^{41}\) He claims that masculinity is inherent, but modern society forces men to repress their true masculinity, creating a “soft male” problem. Bly argues that initiation rituals are missing from modern society, preventing men from truly becoming men.

In response to the widespread success of *Iron John*, scholars of masculinity quickly responded to this essentialist argument by clearly defining masculinity as a social construct. The debate then centered on when and how idealized, modern, Western masculinity developed. E. Anthony Rotundo traces a change in masculinity to the early nineteenth century in his 1993 book, *American Manhood*. Focusing on middle-class, New England men, Rotundo traces the development of American masculinity to the twentieth century in three distinct phases: communal manhood, self-made manhood, and passionate manhood. He claims a man’s masculinity in the eighteenth century derived from his responsibilities to the community. Then, in the early nineteenth century, as American politics and economics structured in a way that privileged self-interest, manhood changed. Individual achievements began to determine masculinity. Self-made manhood remained significant into the twentieth century, but Americans also started to value male passions like competitiveness, aggression, and strength.\(^{42}\)

Others agreed with Rotundo’s argument that manhood dramatically changed in the early nineteenth century. George Mosse claims in his 1996 book *The Image of Man* that a stereotype “of men according to standards of classical beauty” became normative masculinity in an increasingly “visually oriented age.”\(^{43}\) This stereotype developed from the middle-class while the aristocracy declined. Rotundo also considers the middle-class the change-makers,


but Mosse changes the locality. To him, ideal manhood developed in Western Europe. He treats the United States as secondary in the development of a universal Western masculinity.

Michael Kimmel agreed with Rotundo that American manhood shifted in the early nineteenth century in his 2006 book, *American Manhood*. Kimmel analyzes a variety of cultural products to trace the development of manhood into the twentieth century. He characterizes pre-Industrial Revolution manhood as stable because it derived from either land ownership or self-employment. The development of a modern market economy, however, created the self-made man ideal. In this new incarnation, manhood had to be continually proven. As a result, masculinity became far less stable. Men had to actively work to maintain their masculinity that they previously could inherit.\(^{44}\)

Christopher E. Forth, like Mosse, focuses on the male body in a sweeping history of masculinity in Western Europe and the United States. Published in 2008, *Masculinity in the Modern West* provides a cultural history of masculinity since 1700, arguing the male body traditionally allowed for a male-dominated gender hierarchy. However, modernity created paradoxes that “at once reinforce and destabilize the representation of masculinity as an unproblematic quality of male anatomy.”\(^{45}\) For example, technology and machines extended male power while lessening a man’s significance.\(^{46}\) Forth uses the male body to argue that structure of modernity forced masculinity into a continual “crisis.”\(^{47}\)

As early as 1995, Gail Bederman criticized the approach to masculinity history that traces clear traits for manhood. She argues in *Manliness & Civilization* that identifying a singular manhood oversimplifies any given time period. Bederman claims that Progressive Era white men actively used gender and race to maintain their power. She concludes that

\(^{44}\) Ibid.


\(^{46}\) Ibid., 5-6.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
gender is an ideological process that works “to camouflage the fact that gender is dynamic and always changing.”

Sweeping histories of masculinity help to understand general trends. However, as Bederman argues, histories of masculinity that cover multiple centuries have led historians to oversimplify masculinity. Historians have tended to look for a magical turning point that challenged normative masculinity. They argue a dramatic crisis (like modernity or the Industrial Revolution) forced Westerners to question masculinity and then change the ideal. Rotundo, Mosse, Kimmel, and Forth all implicitly state that masculinity simply shifted to a new equilibrium. However, as Bederman demonstrates, gender is an unstable construct. Only a narrow focus can fully illuminate its instability. Some scholars have begun this process with specific attention to gender in the media.

Critical theory of gender in the media began with a psychoanalytic method. Laura Mulvey’s male gaze theory argues that films are created from the perspective of a man. When women appear in film, they are often sexualized as the camera pans over their body. They are the objects to be looked at while male characters do the looking, forcing all viewers to take on the male gaze. Female viewers are forced to look at other women in the same way a man would. Others complicated Mulvey’s theory in finding that the gaze does not always have to be masculine. This holds particularly true in love stories in which the active character can alternate between the man and the woman.

Scholars then looked at how media content represented sex roles and the relationship between men and women. However, the field quickly began to criticize content analysis because it tends to ignore the relationship between the media and the viewer. Fred J. Fejes discusses media masculinity research in his 1992 chapter, “Masculinity as Fact: A Review of Empirical Mass Communication Research on Masculinity” in *Men, Masculinity, and the*

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He demonstrates that researchers previously found that men appear more often on television, particularly in action and drama shows. The researchers revealed that men on television were consistently white, heterosexual, middle-class, single, older, and violent.\textsuperscript{51} They are portrayed mostly at work and in positions of power and the camera focuses on male faces in comparison to body shots of women.\textsuperscript{52} Fejes argues that this sort of sex-roles content analysis can only tell so much. He calls for more attention “to be paid to how audiences, particularly male audiences, use these images in the construction and maintenance of their own notions of masculinity.”\textsuperscript{53} Fejes points to empirical research of pornography as an example for other media studies to follow, but gives little instruction of how to conduct research on audience understanding.\textsuperscript{54} Focusing on film, Diana Saco further develops on this methodology in the same edited collection. She pushes media studies to go beyond “analysis of the representations of real gender differences to analysis of gender differences as (re)presentations.”\textsuperscript{55} Saco says the subject needs a poststructuralist feminist method for “textual address, strategies of decoding and intersubjective mediations.”\textsuperscript{56} Essentially, she argues that everyone watching a film already has a “tenuous” identity, so when media scholars analyze content, they need to account for how the viewers’ identities interact with the media they consume.\textsuperscript{57}

Kenneth Mackinnon combines theory with analysis in his 2003 book, \textit{Representing Men: Maleness and Masculinity in the Media}. In “Part A” he develops a theory for media

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\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 10-12.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 38.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 33, 38.
\end{center}
analysis, but then seems to ignore his theory and analyzes representations of masculinity in 1980s film, television, advertisements, and mediated sports in “Part B.” Mackinnon credits media for the construction of hegemonic masculinity.\(^5^8\) This form of masculinity gives men unchallenged power. It subordinates women and other masculinities and responds to changes in other categories.\(^5^9\) In the 1970s, the media presented a different form of masculinity in response to feminism, but as Mackinnon demonstrates, it did not reflect acceptance of feminism. Rather, “this softening of masculinity may have little to do with female emancipation or empowerment. The most cynical interpretation would be that, in order for masculinity to remain hegemonic, it must admit the feminine at certain historical moments.”\(^6^0\) At the same time, the hegemonic masculinity portrayed by the media is simply an ideal. Mackinnon suggests that assessing how “masculinity is constructed by various programmes in various media and then ‘sold’ to viewers would be most useful.”\(^6^1\) Mackinnon then explains that established theory only applies to cinema.\(^6^2\) Lacking from the methodology is a consideration of how the home environment, with all of its distractions, changes the viewership experience when audiences watch television.\(^6^3\) Nevertheless, he provides no solutions to this dilemma.

Other scholars prefer to avoid discussions of theory and investigate specific aspects of masculinity on television. Lynn C. Spangler traces male-male friendships on television from the 1950s to the 1980s in her 1992 chapter, “Buddies and Pals: A History of Male Friendships on Prime-Time Television.”\(^6^4\) Spangler argues that 1960s sitcoms and dramas


\(^{59}\) Ibid., 10.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 15.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 34.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 32-33.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 33.

followed the patterns established by 1950s westerns. In these shows, men formed close relationships through action. TV shows changed slightly in the 1970s as a response to feminism and because advertisers wanted to attract younger audiences. The “male characters were becoming more sensitive and expressive, even if it was difficult and rarely shared with other men.” However, with the success of the New Right in the 1980s, friendships on television refocused upon the heterosexual married couple. Spengler sees this decline of male friendships on television as limiting. Similarly, Edisol Wayne Dotson criticizes the sexualization of men in 1990s media. His book, Behold the Man: The Hype and Selling of Male Beauty in Media and Culture, analyzes all forms of media throughout the decade. He dedicates one chapter to television, in which he claims that TV shows previously relied on “emotional and characteristic male stereotypes.” However, in the 1990s television began to rely on objectified male bodies. Calling particular attention to Baywatch, daytime soap operas, and MTV, Dotson claims that young, white, attractive, fit men began to appear shirtless more often on television. Both Spangler and Dotson provide valuable studies on how television can limit men in similar ways as it does to women. Narrow definitions of male friendships and overt sexualization of men on TV creates an unattainable ideal for men.

Critical attention to crime television is relatively sparse. Sociologists have provided most of the research on crime TV to match that which had existed and continued to proliferate for women. Their studies address how the crime drama represented the police, criminals, and victims, as well as their effect on viewers. Rhoda Estep and Patrick T. MacDonald trace the development of crimes shows throughout the 1970s in their article, “How prime-time crime evolved on TV, 1976-1983.” In the early 1970s, criminals and

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65 Ibid., 100.
66 Ibid., 105.
67 Edisol Wayne Dotson, Behold the Man: The Hype and Selling of Male Beauty in Media and Culture (New York: The Haworth Press, 1999), 78.
68 Ibid.
victims were overwhelmingly white and middle-class men. By the end of the decade, the majority of murder victims were women and robbers were working-class men. Meanwhile, the police officers solved the crimes at a 90% rate.\(^\text{70}\) In another study, James M. Carlson analyzes the effect of such shows on young people. Sampling the opinions of 6th to 12th graders from Rhode Island in the early 1980s, Carlson concludes that crime television perpetuates misunderstandings of the criminal justice system and promotes “socialization of acceptance of the legitimacy of the American political system.”\(^\text{71}\) These studies are useful for the development of content and their effect on viewers, but they lack any historical analysis or discussion of what the findings mean for the culture.

While sociologists began research on crime television, others wrote about the genre to cater to popular interest, cataloguing crime television. In 2006, Douglas Snauffer published *Crime Television*, a book that traces the development of the crime genre from the 1950s through the 2000s. His sweeping history of the genre provides details about how each show developed and highlights notable episodes. However, as Snauffer states in his preface, his purpose is to “educate and entertain,” so the study lacks sustained critical analysis of the series.\(^\text{72}\) Periodically, Snauffer begins an interesting argument but fails to develop it. For example, he points to the contradiction between anti-government hippie culture of the 1960s and the success of *The FBI* but does not examine why American culture might actually be interested in the show.\(^\text{73}\) Similarly, Karen Rhodes’ *Booking Hawaii Five-O: An Episode Guide and Critical History of the 1968-1980 Television Detective Series* catalogues details on the plot and production of each *Hawaii Five-O* episode, but does little to develop the historical context or social implications of the show.\(^\text{74}\) In another study dedicated exclusively

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\(^{70}\) Ibid.


\(^{73}\) Ibid., 32.

to *Hawaii Five-O*, E. Rampell places the show within the historical and cultural context of Hawaii. In “‘Hawaii Five-O’: A Case Study in Haole-Wood Agitprop,” Rampell argues that despite the fact that the show has been applauded for providing jobs to Hawaiian locals, it perpetuated a Cold War ideology of the dangerous, usually Chinese, communist, while exoticizing Hawaii to promote tourism.

The 2001 collection, *Action TV: Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks*, best places the police genre in its historical context. Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates explain in their introduction that action TV, including crime dramas, arose because advertisers began to court younger, wealthier audiences. They were selling “lifestyle” television that paired action with consumption. Osgerby, Gough-Yates, and Marianne Wells further explain the development of the genre in a subsequent chapter. They trace the emergence of crime and action television in the early 1960s as the western genre died. In the 1970s, audiences began to segment by network. ABC targeted younger audiences, whereas CBS went for an older demographic. Then, the 1980s saw a new focus on appearance. The authors follow this development in order to push for a method that goes beyond textual

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76 Ibid., 81.


79 Ibid., 3.


81 Ibid., 21-22.

82 Ibid., 23.
analysis. They call for the shows to be “contextualized within both the economic and cultural conditions of their production.”

Paul Cobley does just that in his discussion of why one specific crime show, *Kojak*, appealed to 1970s America. Cobley’s chapter, “Who Loves Ya, Baby? *Kojak*, action and the great society,” traces American interest in crime to changes in American politics. Police reorganized into special crime units, while the war on poverty made Americans more knowledgeable about their rights. Cobley explains that *Kojak*’s “audience did not exist in a vacuum untouched by other signs; the verisimilitude of the series operated within the new tangles co-ordinated of public knowledge about racism, criminal rights, civic corruption, reform and the social determinants of poverty.” *Kojak* appealed to Americans because it dealt with all of these issues. While *Kojak* addressed racism to an extent, Elaine Pennicott reveals racism endemic to the crime television. Her chapter, “Who’s the Cat that Won’t Cop Out? Black Masculinity in American Action Series of the Sixties and Seventies,” addresses the continuation of colonial stereotyping of black masculinity. Black men in the genre either represented the “good black” who embraced the system, erasing any legacy of oppression, or the “bad black” who perpetuated the stereotype of dangerously aggressive black men.

Most recently, Roger Sabin published the edited collection, *Cop Shows: A Critical History of Police Dramas on Television*. In his introduction to the book, Sabin states that

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83 Ibid., 28.
85 Ibid., 58-60.
86 Ibid., 65.
88 Ibid., 102, 107, 110-111.
89 Roger Sabin, ed., *Cop Shows: A Critical History of Police Dramas on Television*, (Jefferson, NC:
cop shows “tell us about our attitudes to crime, and hence what we think about the ‘social contract’ that exists between state and citizen. They both transmit and reflect politics of the moment.”\textsuperscript{90} The book allots one chapter to the cop shows deemed most significant by the authors, including \textit{Columbo}, \textit{Hawaii Five-O}, and \textit{Kojak}. The chapters provide useful background information on each show and some critical analysis. However, as Sabin states in the introduction, the purpose of the book is “to provide an accessible introduction to the topic and offer a pathway into its study.”\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Cop Shows} masterfully succeeds at achieving this objective, as each chapter in this thesis uses the information in \textit{Cop Shows} as a starting point.

\textbf{KOJAK, HAWAII FIVE-O, \& COLUMBO}

While these studies provide valuable insight into television representations of men and masculinity, the field remains wide open. Despite its wide spread success, there is a clear lack of research on crime television. With a target audience of men, investigation of how crime television represented men is in need of development. This thesis narrows in on one decade, the 1970s, to demonstrate the complexity of gender constructions. The feminist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s posed a new challenge to masculinity but did not directly change masculinity. Rather than a singular masculine ideal, multiple masculinities were created. Particularly in the age of mass media, masculinity has been continually questioned and reconstructed. This thesis looks at how American television, an almost universally consumed form of media, negotiated masculinity in the 1970s. Ultimately, diverse representations of masculinity in crime television achieved the same goal. By directly and indirectly engaging with feminist claims, \textit{Kojak}, \textit{Hawaii Five-O}, and \textit{Columbo} refuted feminism and maintained a gender hierarchy dominated by men.


\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
I focus the scope of this study on just three shows to develop the nuances of each individual show. *Kojak*, *Hawaii Five-O*, and *Columbo* were chosen because the shows were created distinctly for their 1970s audiences and aired within the decade. Further, of the ten crime shows that ranked in the top ten rated shows for at least one year of the decade, these three series had the best ratings. For a sampling method, I watched three episodes per season of *Kojak* and *Hawaii Five-O*. While *Columbo* ran as specials beyond the 1970s, for the purpose of this thesis, I am only addressing the episodes from the 1970s as a part of *NBC Mystery Movie*. Because *Columbo* aired in rotation with other shows, it had far fewer episodes per season, so I reduced my sample size to two episodes per season. My method for choosing individual episodes to watch was not systematic. Story arcs rarely spanned across multiple episodes, so there was no need to consider developing plot lines in choosing episodes. I tried to watch an episode from roughly the beginning, middle, and end of each season, but I privileged episodes that seemed most relevant to gender constructions based upon the plot description provided by the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) over a clear-cut sampling method.

Each chapter provides an analysis of a singular series. While the leading men are most important in understanding how each show depicted gender relations, the storyline in each episode is almost as significant. Therefore, each chapter highlights three episodes from each series that are representative of trends found throughout the series. The constructions

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92 *Hawaii Five-O* first aired in 1968, but it ran for twelve seasons. Because it spanned the entire decade, it is fair to include it as a distinctly 1970s show.


94 Both *Hawaii Five-O* and *Kojak* averaged 23 episodes per season, whereas *Columbo* only aired an average of 6 episodes per season. Three episodes of *Hawaii Five-O* and *Kojak* represent a sample size of 13% of the whole. In contrast, two episodes of *Columbo* produce a sample size of 33% of the entire series.

95 The discussions of episodes appear in thematic order, rather than chronological order, because the representations of masculinity remain static throughout each series.
of masculinity are most pronounced in contrast to femininity, so episodes depicting women are privileged. Shorter discussions of other episodes are included to establish patterns.

This thesis employs structural and poststructural analysis. Structural analysis demonstrates why these shows were so relevant during the 1970s, while a poststructural analysis addresses the representations of gender in each show. I use Susan Douglas’ poststructural approach to media study. As she states in the introduction to Where the Girls Are, “there is a symbiotic relationship between the media executives” and audiences. However, she continues, “this doesn’t mean that the media are all-powerful, or that audiences are just helpless masses of inarticulate protoplasm, lying there ready to believe whatever they see or hear.” While those that create the television shows have a great deal of power in creating content, audiences ultimately determine what the television shows mean to them. Viewer responses to shows are important to understanding how the representations of masculinity in these crime shows actually affected its audiences. Furthermore, an integral piece to poststructural analysis is interrogating liminality. Liminal figures exist at the limits, destabilizing clear categories.

Episodes are deconstructed using a textual and visual analysis. Textual analysis is used for dialogue and the interpersonal relationships. I also employ visual analysis of the characters’ appearance and their physicality. In this context, physicality refers to positioning and movements of characters. For example, men tend to be placed closer to the camera than women, so they appear larger. Further, gestures reveal the underlying intent of dialogue.

The chapters are organized in order from most traditionally masculine main character to the least: Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, and Columbo. My discussion of Kojak centers on Kojak’s hyper-masculinity, which derives from his physical appearance, complete control, sexual prowess, and moral superiority. This is constructed in contrast to “hysterical” women and

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96 Douglas, Where the Girls Are, 16.
97 Ibid.
98 The definition of hyper-masculinity is contested and changes as the definition of masculinity changes. Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson provide the best sweeping definition of the term: “Hypermascularity refers
deviant, usually working-class, men. Steve McGarrett of *Hawaii Five-O* tends to be less extreme than Kojak. With a prettier face, McGarrett delegates power more often. His masculinity is defined even more so in opposition to femininity, but race and politics factor into the construction of McGarrett’s masculinity as well. With the Hawaiian setting, McGarrett’s masculinity has as much to do with his whiteness and Americanness as his maleness. Columbo exchanges machismo for cunning. Less physically attractive than Kojak and McGarrett, Columbo creates a naïve persona to trick criminals. His intelligence and comfort with murderers create a more liminal masculinity. His empathy for criminals in some ways feminizes him, but he is still represented as superior to women. While each show represents their leading men differently, ultimately *Kojak, Hawaii Five-O*, and *Columbo* give their leading men absolute control, perpetuating a traditional gender hierarchy.

to the sets of behaviors and beliefs characterized by unusually highly developed masculine forms as defined by existing cultural values.” While this definition is perfectly adaptable, it also gives little information on what characteristics to expect from a hyper-masculine man. A more relevant definition would be one that defines hyper-masculinity during the time period. Leonard Glass best provided this in a 1984 article in *Psychiatry*, which Kimmel and Aronson also summarize. According to Glass, a hyper-masculine man can take two forms: “The ‘man’s man’ is the cowboy/jock--strong, dependable, rough, mystified by women, rigid, unemotional, powerful, dirty; the ‘ladies’ man’ is the Casanova--smooth, charming, stylish, sly, seductive, sexually predatory, knowledgeable about what women want, and emotionally counterfeit.”; Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson, ed. *Men and Masculinities: A Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 1: A-J* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 418.
CHAPTER 2

KOJAK

Set in New York City, *Kojak*’s creators prided themselves on producing one of the most realistic crime television shows of the decade. *Kojak* aired on CBS from 1973 to 1978, addressing real issues central to the impoverished city. Roger Sabin perfectly describes *Kojak* as “one of the most popular TV cop shows of all time.” Of its five seasons, *Kojak* ranked in the top twenty highest rated programs for three seasons. At the show’s height of popularity in the 1973-1974 season, it had an estimated audience of 15,424,600 viewers out of the 66,200,000 households with a television set. The show “was built around three things: the macho charisma of star Telly Savalas, its sparky squad room banter, and its perceived ‘realism’ - typified by the gritty multiculturalism of its New York locations.” *Kojak* piloted as a TV movie. The show established the precedent by representing a real and politically important murder case. Airing as a *CBS Thursday Night Movie* on March 8, 1973, *The Marcus-Nelson Murders* depicted the 1963 rape and murder of two New York women. Telly Savalas starred as Kojack (the spelling changed to Kojak for the TV show). In the movie, Kojack realizes that mistakes in the investigation led to an innocent, young, black man being framed for the murders.

The show’s writer and creator, Abby Mann, wanted to use *Kojak* to reflect injustice within the criminal justice system, particularly for the working-class and people of color. Abby Mann (1927-2008), born Abraham Goodman, was a male film writer and director. Known for creating films with politically charged content, he is most famous for writing *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) that depicts a trial of four Nazis for war crimes in American-
occupied Germany. His initial interest in writing *The Marcus-Nelson Murders* stemmed from his commitment to social justice. Universal had a book about the real case and gave it to Mann. When Mann interviewed the man framed as well as the cop that Kojack would represent, he realized the police and District Attorney’s office “picked the wrong person and they stuck with it.”

Even though Universal (NBC) originally gave Mann the idea for *The Marcus-Nelson Murders* and therefore *Kojak*, Universal refused to air them because it feared critically representing police. Instead, CBS picked up the show as it was trying to court older (over 35) city audiences. *Kojak* maintained the movie pilot’s original flavor to a certain extent, but once it became a TV show the writers scaled back the political message and focused on the character of Kojak. Mann decided not to direct the show after the first few episodes because he “thought it should be more socially founded.”

Famous for his “Who loves ya, baby?” catchphrase, Telly Savalas starred as Lieutenant Theodore Kojak of the New York City Police Department’s Eleventh Precinct, Manhattan South Patrol Borough. Tall, broad, bald, and always in a three piece suit with a lollipop hanging out of his mouth, Kojak’s presence dominated the show. Throughout the entire series, Kojak remains the focal point of the show. He does, however, have a team that grows in importance throughout the series. As head of the Detective Department, Kojak reports to Captain Frank McNeil, played by Dan Frazer. Captain McNeil is Kojak’s boss, yet continually takes orders from Kojak just as often as he gives them. Kojak is known for demanding a lot from his detectives and will do everything in his power, sometimes beyond his legal power, to catch the criminal. Younger and with a smaller build, Detective Bobby

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104 Ibid.

105 Sabin, “*Kojak*,” 83-84.


107 Sabin, “*Kojak*,” 83-85.

108 Mann, interview.
Crocker (Kevin Dobson) works most closely with Kojak. He willingly takes the orders Kojak yells to him from his office. Detective Stavros acts as the comedic relief in the show. Played by George Savalas, Telly Savalas’ brother, Stavros usually does the less dangerous investigative work and continually receives ridicule from Kojak.

The series provided a fairly accurate representation of the NYPD. Demonstrating the urban decay New York experienced throughout the decade, Kojak had a small, dingy office within the precinct office. While the set designers modeled his office after the real squad in New York, claims that the show was filmed on location are a stretch. Technical advisor, Burton Armus, explained that every season the crew filmed in New York for at most two weeks to get background shots and a couple of scenes. Armus, who worked as an NYPD detective for twenty years, thought the accuracy of the show diminished as the series progressed. In “the beginning, they tried to be very accurate. But as they got greedy and the network got more and more involved, they got less and less accurate. By the fifth year it was a fuckin’ joke. They were just doing it like any one of these silly cop shows that are on now.”

Aristotle “Telly” Savalas (1922-1994) was born in New York City to Greek immigrant parents. Prior to playing Kojak, Savalas had a number of careers. He served in the army in World War II, produced radio broadcasts in the 1950s, and starred in movies in the 1970s. Audiences already knew him “for playing movie heavies,” such as a rapist in The Dirty Dozen (1967). Ultimately, Kojak gave Savalas the most widespread fame. In his

110 Ibid.
111 Patrick Howard, “Telly Savalas: About Telly Savalas,” www.tellysavalas.com/about/bio/index.html, accessed on April 5, 2016; Savalas uses his ethnicity as a part of Kojak’s character development. His ethnic identity plays a role in developing his masculinity (as does the ethic identity of McGarrett and Columbo), which will be further developed in the conclusion.
112 Ibid.
113 Sabin, “Kojak,” 83-84.
role as Kojak, he was on the cover of *TV Guide* six times, won an Emmy award in the show’s first season, and earned two Golden Globes (1975 and 1976) out of four nominations.\(^{114}\)

Savalas played a large role in developing his own character. As a New York native, “he had an undeniable charm; he’d grown up in the city and had an aura of ‘knowing his way around.’”\(^{115}\) Paul Michael Glaser, who appeared in one episode of Kojak in 1974 and went on to star as Detective Dave Starsky in *Starsky and Hutch*, remembered that the show revolved around Savalas. He said that the “show was very much in the service of Telly. You know, keep Telly happy. That kind a thing. It was kind of top heavy.”\(^{116}\) Hector Elizondo appeared in two episodes of *Kojak* in 1973 and 1976. He confirmed Savalas’s level of control over the show, recalling that Savalas forced him to wear a toupee while filming because Kojak was “the only coconut.”\(^{117}\) Edward James Olmos agreed that Savalas did not give up control easily. Olmos appeared on *Kojak* as a bartender. While filming one particular scene, Olmos went off script. This prompted Savalas to call him a “primadonna” and walk “out of the scene. So like an hour, he’s inside of his trailer.”\(^{118}\) Essentially, Savalas stalled production to make the point that he controlled the show.\(^{119}\)

\(^{114}\) Howard, interview.

\(^{115}\) Sabin, “*Kojak*,” 83-84.


\(^{117}\) Hector Elizondo, interview by Adrienne Faillace, Archive of American Television, Cop/Detective/Mystery Series, Kojak, http://www.emmytvlegends.org/interviews/shows/kojak#: However, Roscoe Orman was allowed to appear with a bald head in 1977. Even Orman knew how rare that was, stating that “I was probably the only other bald headed detective to appear on Kojak other than Telly Savalas; Roscoe Orman, interview by Karen Herman, July 20, 2004, Archive of American Television, Cop/Detective/Mystery Series, Kojak, http://www.emmytvlegends.org/interviews/shows/kojak#, April 17, 2015.


\(^{119}\) Olmos played a bartender that Savalas was supposed to ask one question to. Olmos changed the script by not responding because he did not think a bartender would allow someone to barge into his bar, without showing a badge, and start asking questions. He admitted that he probably should not have questioned the writing, saying “It was terrible, now that I think about…” Nevertheless, the episode demonstrates how dramatically Savalas could overreact to someone else trying to take some ownership of their acting, and thus the scene.
the show, remembered, “Telly-- he’d fill the screen. His personality was Kojak. The accuracy was what surrounded him. But the character of Kojak was a conglomerate of many people, and mostly of Telly.” 120 Essentially, Savalas’s personality helped, in part, to create Kojak’s masculinity.

Roger Sabin describes Kojak as “obsessed with his appearance; old-fashioned in his hand kissing behavior towards women but respectful of feminism; an erudite without being (necessarily) educated. He therefore occupied an interesting middle space in the history of male representation.” 121 Sabin’s assessment of Kojak is accurate because he never overtly condemned feminism. However, despite the Mann’s liberal intentions, Kojak never actually approved of feminism either. Episodes continually reminded audiences that women put themselves at risk when they left home, reinforcing the idea that women should remain in traditional gender roles. Further, he did dress too well for a traditionally masculine man, especially on the salary he supposedly received as a NYPD officer. 122 Even with his polished appearance, Kojak is hyper-masculine. He dominates physically, controls everyone around him, attracts the ladies, and uses force with ease. Despite (or as a result of) Mann’s liberal intentions for the show, Kojak represented the hyper-masculine.

The opening credits establish that Kojak revolves around its main character. Without any introduction to the episode’s plot, the opening credits begin each episode. The first three shots are close ups of Telly Savalas’s face as images of New York City fills in around him. Then, the viewer sees Kojak in action. He runs and points his gun. A few more pictures of Savalas’s face appear while large yellow print says “Telly Savalas as Kojak.” Once the story begins, the other actors’ names appear. It is clear that Kojak is the hero in the story, and

120 Armus, interview.
121 Ibid., 85-86.
122 The best reference to salary occurs in “Justice for All,” in which Kojak almost takes another job from a law firm because he will be able to make considerably more money than as a police officer; Michael Kozoll and Ross Tell, Kojak, season 5, episode 13, “Justice for All,” directed by Jim Benson, original airdate January 7, 1978.
therefore the one to respect. While the male characters in the show represent a wide range of masculinities, Kojak is overtly portrayed as the most important man.

Even though Kojak represents hyper-masculinity, he never goes beyond acceptable masculinity. The episode, “My Brother, My Enemy,” which aired in season three in 1975, both glorifies Kojak’s hyper-masculinity while demonstrating that strength and desire for action need to be kept in balance with rationality and control. It contrasts Kojak’s masculinity to that of a criminal and one of his detectives. Both the criminal and his detective represent problematic hyper-masculinity because they fail to control their emotions, which ends with dire consequences. Similarly, the episode trivialized femininity. Women rarely appear in the episode and the series in general. However, when women are on screen they are often portrayed as overly emotional and in need of a man’s help.

In “My Brother, My Enemy,” Sylvester Stallone guest stars as Detective Rick Daly. The episode opens with Detective Daly driving around town at night with another detective. As a cigarette hangs out of his mouth, Daly complains about the detail Kojak gave them, immediately establishing Kojak’s complete control over his inferiors. Meanwhile, a fight breaks out in a nearby apartment. The fight, which the audience later learns started over a woman named Carol, ends when one man stabs the other to death. Daly and his companion hear about the altercation over the radio. Even though another police officer is responding to the incident, Daly takes it upon himself to go to the crime scene. When his partner tries to convince him otherwise, Daly urgently explains, “Somebody needs help now. Who knows where that other car is?” He then speeds off, making dramatic screeching noises with his car.

Once at the apartment complex where the murder occurred, Daly tries to question the only witness, an elderly woman. The witness cannot articulate what happened through her sobs, so the detective yells at the ‘hysterical’ woman. She finally manages to tell him that the

124 Ibid.
murderer ran upstairs. Daly follows the murderer up to the roof of the building, sees someone move, and immediately fires his gun. His target was actually a young boy, who calls for his “mama” as he dies.

Calling for “mama” as someone dies or is severely injured is a consistent theme throughout Kojak. The show uses that line to establish a character’s innocence if the dying character is a child. For example, in one of the final moments of the episode, “Cry for the Kids,” which is described in greater detail later in this chapter, a young teen who got caught up in a gang is injured and calls “Mom! Dad!” The moment establishes that even though he committed terrible crimes, he is still a young boy and, in many respects, innocent.

However, children are not the only characters who cry for their parents in times of death or near death. In “Girl in the River,” Kojak ends the episode by shooting and killing a serial murderer of single women. As he dies, he says “mama.” In this context, calling for his mother calls into question the murderer’s masculinity and sanity. It suggests his psychological motivation for murder is based upon an unhealthy relationship with his mother.

In “My Brother, My Enemy,” Daly fails in his job as protector because he is too eager for action. In line with the Mann’s original liberal intent for the show, Daly represents the problems with the increasing power of police forces in the 1970s. He never stopped to think through the appropriate next step. He did not need to respond to the call, but was too keen to participate in more exciting police work. Once at the crime scene, he had another opportunity to respond with an even temper, but instead chased after a murderer and shot a child because he acted out of adrenaline and fear. Daly poses masculinity just as problematic as, if not more than, the criminal who intentionally murdered another man.

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125 David Taylor, Kojak, season 5, episode 4, “Cry for the Kids,” directed by Leo Penn, original airdate October 23, 1977.


127 Ibid.
Once Kojak arrives on the scene, he chooses to believe Daly’s claims that someone fired a shot at him first. Kojak’s superiors seem intent on persecuting the detective, but Kojak defends Daly. For the first half of the episode, Kojak is quick to defend his own man. When one captain questions Kojak, the lieutenant responds with, “Look, Captain I can’t help what happened up on that roof, right? What do we do? Offer Daly up as a scapegoat? What good is that gonna do?” While Kojak continues to defend his detective who unjustly killed a child, he never appears naïve. As Kojak continually explains, he just wants to find out the truth and remain loyal to a fellow police officer until the evidence proves otherwise. When others challenge Kojak’s position, he responds with an elevated voice, explaining why his actions are correct. However, Kojak never completely loses his temper. He is always in control, even when others anger him.

As the police try to piece together what occurred with both the original crime and the shooting of the boy, the murderer, Marty, hides out with Carol. Like Kojak, the criminal is tall, broad, and muscular with a very strong jaw line. However, because his violence and disregard for the law leads to his demise, he represents deviant masculinity. As a criminal, he cannot control his actions, which leads to his capture. His plan to flee to Florida fails when he attempts to steal jewelry from an elderly woman. The police confront him, he stabs a police officer, and then other officers arrest him. While the episode ends with the assumption that he will receive a murder sentence, the last time the viewer sees him, he confirms that Daly did unjustly kill the boy and is lying about what happened. He describes Daly as a “bad cop” to Kojak, explaining, “at least I know what I was doing. Oh, but your cop. A big hero. He was so scared he got the first thing that moved.” The murderer is an example of problematic hyper-masculinity, but he is also portrayed as superior to Daly, who acted out of

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128 Boretz, Kojak, “My Brother, My Enemy.”
129 The relationship between Marty and Carol is not entirely clear, but some sort of sexual relationship between the two is implied.
130 Boretz, Kojak, “My Brother, My Enemy.”
fear. Ultimately, because the murderer acts deliberately, rather than emotionally, he is portrayed as worthy of more respect.

Once Kojak realizes Daly killed the boy, he goes to talk to him on the same roof where the murder occurred. Kojak firmly establishes that Daly is responsible for the boy’s murder, so Daly loses control. Breaking objects, he yells, “I am a cop! It’s all I ever wanted, ever thought about. Nothin’ else!” Kojak calmly stands there, smoking a cigarette and periodically making comments that question Daly’s logic. Finally, after Daly tries to defend himself too many times, Kojak responds in his authoritative voice, “what you did disgraced every police officer in the city. You’re no good. That’s the end of the story.” Throughout the entire episode, Kojak remains the bastion of morality. When he trusted Daly, he simply wanted the truth. Now that he knows Daly is responsible, his biggest criticism is that his lie questions the authority of all police officers.

Meanwhile, the women in the episode appear trivial. Carol is represented as completely superficial. When the audience first sees her, she is in hiding with the murderer in a hotel room. Carol sits on the bed as she paints her nails and complains that all her clothes are still in the dead man’s apartment. Kojak later inspects the apartment, and most of the clothes turn out to be lingerie. Later in the episode, Carol appears while putting on makeup. The police finally catch her when she cannot resist returning to the apartment for her clothing. The police then use her as a witness against the murderer, who had already been arrested. Essentially, her vanity jeopardizes both her and Marty’s freedom. While Carol seems vapid and superficial, other women appear hysterical. The elderly woman who found the original murder victim struggles to answer Daly’s questions when he first arrives at the apartment complex. The dead boy’s mother is inconsolable throughout the entire episode. While both women have valid reasons for expressing such emotions, stoic men surround them. The contrast reinforces the notion that women cannot control the whims of their

131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
emotions. The episode implicitly responds to feminist demands during the decade, arguing that women need men to do the real, important work.

Kojak’s masculinity derives from his control. He has control over his emotions and everyone around him. In contrast to Daly, who has a breakdown on the roof, and the ‘hysterical’ women in the show, Kojak appears incredibly stable. The criminal receives more respect from Kojak than Daly because he maintains a similar level of control. However, his masculinity is not complete because he ignores the established order. This episode ends by reaffirming Kojak’s role. While Daly clears out his locker, a new detective talks about how excited he is for this transfer, “even if this Kojak does run our tails off.” The final scene shows Kojak passing Daly on the stairs. After they pass, Daly pauses and looks up at Kojak. The screen freezes with a close up of Kojak’s face while Daly looks back with remorse. The image reaffirms that Kojak deserves the admiration and emulation from audiences.

While “My Brother, My Enemy” demonstrates Kojak’s superiority as a rational and controlled detective, other episodes further demonstrate his role as ‘protector.’ The season two episode, “Hush Now, Don’t You Die,” originally aired in 1974 and addressed an issue that feminists brought to the national conversation and conservatives appropriated: rape. The episode opens with a young woman, Janet, walking her fiancé to class. Her fiancé leaves for class and Janet begins to walk home. Two obviously drunk, working-class men pull the car to the side of the road and begin to harass her, amplifying the fear that women put themselves in danger when they leave the house alone. As she continues to walk, trying to ignore their advances, one of the men claims, “she’s asking for it.” They then get out of the car, threaten her with a gun, drag her into the car, and take her to an abandoned building. As she pleads with them to leave her alone, one man explains that they are “gonna teach you to

\[133\] Ibid.


\[135\] Ibid.
be nice.” The scene cuts to Janet curled up on the ground while both men are covered in scratches. One of the rapists, John, takes out a gun to kill Janet so she will not report them. The other man tries to stop him, but John kills his friend, drops the gun, and runs away.

When the police arrive on the scene, Janet is gone. Kojak investigates the crime scene and quickly realizes a rape occurred before the murder. He decides that in order to solve his case, he must find Janet. Of course, Janet’s father forbids her from reporting the rape. After Janet tells him about her rape, he yells, storms around the house, and slams doors. When Janet’s mother reasons that not reporting leaves other women at risk of being raped as well, he yells that he only cares about his daughter. He does not want her to be treated like a “prostitute,” telling her that she will still wear a white dress on her wedding day, and no one will know, not even her fiancé. The camera focuses directly on Janet’s face when she responds, “I’ll know.” In this scene, the women seem more reasonable. Janet’s father cannot control his emotions and clearly wants to punish her rapist himself (he later tracks John down, but decides against shooting him when he has the opportunity).

Janet’s mother expresses her distress that two men raped her daughter, but also thinks about the consequences of allowing a rapist and a murderer to remain free. Janet receives a level of agency rarely seen on Kojak. When she tells her father she will know about her rape, the scene shows her face. However, Kojak has no feminist agenda. Most young women in the show are treated exclusively as sexual objects. Primarily, the show reminds its audience that women are vulnerable to male dominance and are in need of protection. Janet had taken on a masculine role by walking her fiancé to class. Only after her fiancé leaves do the rapists approach Janet, taking away her agency and re-objectifying her.

Susan Douglas writes that part of her feminist awakening involved her throwing “slippers, or whatever else was handy, at the TV set during...Kojak,” which is predictable

\[^{136}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{137}\text{Ibid.}\]
because *Kojak* contains a number of themes that perpetuate oppression of women.\(^{138}\) Many episodes establish that women need protection. In “Justice for All,” Kojak investigates a series of deaths from dirty drugs.\(^{139}\) While many had already died due to drug use, the police started to intensify their investigation when two wealthy women die. However, Kojak makes a point to focus on a fifteen-year-old girl who overdosed from the drug and died. He arrested her for soliciting prostitution three years earlier. In one of his typical rants about the responsibility of the justice system, Kojak asks, “in this great big city, this big apple, who stood up and said, ‘you know, this shouldn’t be allowed to happen? This kid needs a chance.’ Nobody. Not us. Not them. Nobody.”\(^{140}\) Kojak’s indignation here stems from the fact that no one helped this poor, young girl. As a result, she became a prostitute by age twelve and died from drug overdose at age fifteen.\(^{141}\)

Other episodes reveal women’s vulnerability to aggressive men. In “Girl in the River,” the man who called out for his mother as he died is known as “Excalibur.”\(^{142}\) He killed a total of eight young, single women by strangling them with a silk stocking with a quarter in it. He leaves the dead women in water with a purple cord around their neck and a red Excalibur marked on their forehead. Excalibur, as a symbol represents responsibly of power, but the sword is also a penetrating object. Marking his victims demonstrates the murderer’s power over them. At the end of the episode, however, the murderer reveals that he never actually wielded any power. He killed the women because his mother told him to, saying that she goes “to him at night and whispers to me there is so much evil in the world. You, you asked for this. You begged for it. Don’t pretend you didn’t. Flaunting themselves.


\(^{139}\) Kozell and Tell, *Kojak*, “Justice for All.”

\(^{140}\) Ibid.

\(^{141}\) This episode also follows a second storyline in which a law firm has offered him a job as an investigator. Kojak considers taking the very high paying job, but by the end of the episode realizes the law is corrupt and was working against his investigation of the drug dealers throughout the entire episode. His need to protect people like this young girl and commitment to justice leads Kojak to decide to stay with the police department.

\(^{142}\) Welles, *Kojak*, “Girl in the River.”
Flaunting themselves! Do you hear me?" While the killer is characterized as insane, he also perpetuates victim blaming. He claims that the women were “begging” to die through their promiscuous dress and actions. Even though he is the villain, this argument maintains that women need to act in a certain manner to prevent dangerous men from violating them, whether that is rape or murder. In the end, the person that saves all women from “Excalibur” is Kojak.

Further, part of Kojak’s masculinity derives from overtly sexualizing women. While working on the case in “Justice for All,” Kojak stops to use a payphone. As he tries to get the phone to work, a woman walks by, and we see Kojak clearly look up and down her entire body. Later in the episode, he flirts with a woman to obtain information. When he says, “when it comes to true love, hey, I’m a specialist,” she replies “I know about you Theo.” While Kojak’s personal relationships rarely appear in the storyline, interactions like this imply Kojak’s sexual prowess, which adds to his hyper-masculine persona.

More significantly, the central issue of “Hush Now, Don’t You Die” blames a rape victim for obstructing justice. Solving the murder depends upon Janet reporting her rape. Kojak questions why she will not come forward, and lists a number of very valid reasons for why a woman would not want to report rape such as their reputation, the opinion of a boyfriend or her parents, and treatment in court. However, he immediately belittles those reasons when he blames women like Janet for the existence of rape: “You know, the less we prosecute rape, the more these kinky ones out there think they can get away with it. You want to bet the first police was created to protect women and here we are 25,000 years later and we can’t even do that. Ok baby, you come to papa because I want to help.” Kojak often uses the term “baby,” but in this moment his word choice particularly places himself in

143 Ibid.
144 Lenski, Kojak, “Hush Now, Don’t You Die.”
145 Ibid.
a creepy, fatherly role. In Kojak’s mind, he is the protector of women, and Janet is the one failing to help him do his job.

Ultimately, he pieces everything together and confronts Janet’s parents. In that conversation, Kojak makes it even clearer that Janet is in the wrong. Her mother tells him to leave, saying that he cannot barge in and make accusations against them. Kojak responds with: “Accusations. You mean you think she is guilty of something for merely being a victim. Is that how you see it? Well, that is a mistake. Unless, of course she is really guilty of something.” Kojak is technically correct that by not reporting her rape, Janet is also not reporting a murder. He makes the very sex positive statement that Janet is not responsible for her rape, but also implies that the only reason a woman would not report rape is if she had something to hide.

At the end of the episode, Kojak finds Janet just in time to save her from John, the rapist and murderer. Afterward, Kojak talks to Janet’s father, acknowledging that Janet will have a terrible time reliving her rape in court to prosecute John, but the men (without Janet’s consent) decide it is the better option. Kojak explains, “Nobody says the law is perfect, but it beats whatever the hell is in second place.” The episode ends with a clear message. Janet’s choices and emotions are insignificant compared to the law. Here, Kojak forces a woman to recount rape in order to solve his case and appears like a hero for doing so. He seems to be providing protection for Janet, but in reality he is forcing her to experience more trauma.

Other episodes construct Kojak’s masculinity by demonstrating his commitment to protecting the streets of New York from gang violence. Playing on the fears of many Americans that their cities were becoming centers for violence, the episode “Cry for the Kids” aired during Kojak’s fifth and final season in 1977. It opens with a series of images of innocent children playing all over the city. The viewer sees children playing on a slide,
with water shooting out of an open fire hydrant, with toy boats in a lake, and with a basketball. As the children with the basketball leave their game, they walk past a group of young teenagers loitering on the sidewalk. The contrast between the playing children and teenagers is stark. As a reminder of how dangerous New York City is for children, the teenagers reveal how the city has already stripped them of their morality. A few are throwing quarters while two boys sit on steps. One brags about how he got out of juvenile detention after stealing. When the other boy, Billy, asks if he saw another friend in jail, the boy responds, “Yeah, he’s in for killing. It’s going to take his lawyer a few more days to get him out.”

After their conversation, Billy watches a man walk down the street and he follows him. Once they are alone in a parking lot, Billy threatens the man with a gun, demanding his briefcase. After a short confrontation, Billy becomes frightened and shoots the man. He grabs the briefcase and runs away. The viewer later learns that this man was a messenger for a local gang and Billy had been commissioned by a rival gang to steal the briefcase from him. When Billy exceeds expectations by killing the man, the gang decides to hire him.

When Billy returns to his parents’ house, his mom apologizes profusely for not being able to go to the movies with him. Billy’s parents own a struggling restaurant, so his mother had to work even though she promised to spend time with her son. The year this episode aired (1977), many Americans believed children were in grave danger from a number of threats like crime, drugs, and pedophile rings. This was mainly due to media hype on the topic, but women who worked away from the home were often blamed for all of the threats to their children. While both parents work, the juxtaposition of Billy murdering a man with his mother apologizing for not being able to spend time with her son implies that she is more responsible for her son’s delinquency. While Billy’s father works just as often, he does not shoulder the same amount of blame. As the episode progresses and Kojak begins to

149 Ibid.

questions Billy’s parents, Billy’s mother remains unwilling to accept that her son could commit any crime and continually blames Billy’s friends. In contrast, Billy’s father appears more rational and willing to accept that his son could be responsible for the murder.

Women working outside the home often cause problems. In “Life, Liberation and The Pursuit of Death,” a female advertising executive witnesses a psychology graduate student dump the body of a professor he just murdered into the river.\footnote{Gene R. Kearney, \textit{Kojak}, season 3, episode 6, “Life, Liberation and The Pursuit of Death,” directed by Nicolas Sgarro, original airdate October 26, 1975.} The graduate student and one of his peers who helped with the murder realizes that their witness has a high stress job and decide to take advantage of her. Torturing her with pranks as small as turning off her alarm to switching her medication, they almost convince her to commit suicide. While Kojak intervenes in time to save her and arrest the criminals, it is clear that the stresses of an important career made her vulnerable to the psychological attacks.\footnote{Ibid.} Viewers watch Kojak deal with a high-stress job every week and he never seems psychologically unstable from such stress. His masculinity, in part, derives from his ability to work on intense cases into all hours of the night without showing any signs of emotional or physical fatigue.

At one point in “Life, Liberation and The Pursuit of Death,” the women is so stressed that she begins chain smoking. Kojak offers her one of his signature lollipops instead. The lollipop originally made its way into \textit{Kojak} because Savalas was trying to quit smoking. Mann jokingly went on set and replaced Savalas’s cigarette with a lollipop.\footnote{Mann, interview.} The producers liked it, and the lollipop became part of Kojak’s character.\footnote{Ibid.} The juxtaposition of the childish, yet phallic lollipop complicates his masculinity. At the very least, the lollipop, paired with his bald head, infantilizes Kojak. Continually placing a phallic object in his mouth, however, could have larger implications that complicate his hyper-masculine image.
Later that day in “Cry for the Kids,” Billy goes back out to meet with the man from the gang that wants him to join, Hackford. Billy attempts to break their ties, but Hackford refuses. Throughout the rest of the episode, Billy continually tries to leave the crime organization that has trapped him. It is clear that the gang is taking advantage of Billy as he struggles to distance himself from them. The men in the gang understand that protective laws make it difficult to prosecute minors, so having a teenager working for them works to their advantage.

Meanwhile, Kojak quickly realizes that Billy committed the murder but struggles to collect enough evidence to arrest him. Complaining about how difficult it is for him to arrest a minor, Kojak tells the Captain “I keep trying. You know, the fact that some kids are holding hands with hoods means nothing to nobody! All I get is a lot of breast beating and hand wringing.”

Accustomed to Kojak’s rants, Captain McNeil just asks if Kojak is finished, but Kojak completely ignores him and continues, “Oh, now this kid could have knocked off fifteen people, might beat up fifteen old ladies, raped twenty women, and no one will ever know, except the victim. So, what do we keep the records for?” Typical of Kojak’s personality, he positions himself as the protector of morality.

When Billy goes to court, the judge begins the hearing by reminding everyone that the meeting is not a trial. In most crime shows, including Kojak, the episode ends with the arrest of a criminal because the police officer finished their part of the job. Further, there is an assumption that the criminal in every episode will be convicted and sent to prison, which reinforces the idea that police forces needed to grow during the 1970s. The implication is that police always arrest guilty criminals. This episode, however, includes the hearing with the judge to reinforce the message that children can be dangerous criminals. The judge decides to place Billy on probation for one year because he has stable parents and he does not know if

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155 Taylor, Kojak, “Cry for the Kids.”
156 Ibid.
Billy has any criminal record. After the decision, Kojak yells to the judge “what the hell is putting him on the outside gonna do? I mean he got in trouble outside.” The courtroom clears, and Kojak and the judge argue over the decision. The judge tries to defend himself by explaining the nature of the laws, but Kojak stands and yells, “we’re creating a new set of criminal that nobody can touch.” At that point, the judge begins to agree with Kojak. He complains that the “damn system is wrong. It’s coming apart. I don’t know what to do about it...I see hundreds of kids come through that revolving door every week.” To that, Kojak replies, “yeah, and I see their victims,” and dramatically leaves the courtroom.

Meanwhile, Billy is walking through Central Park. Demonstrating how easy it is for them to lose their innocence, children play in the background as two men from the rival gang confront Billy. One man shoves money into Billy’s pocket and forces him to call Hackford to tell him to meet at the park. When Hackford and one other man arrive, the other gangsters are hiding on higher ground. Billy pulls out his gun and tells him that they are being watched. Billy explains he will not shoot, but has been told to kill him. Hackford responds by shooting Billy in the arm.

As Billy falls to the ground, Kojak and his team arrive on the scene. After a few chaotic moments, the police apprehend Hackford and his companion, but the other gangsters drive away unnoticed. Then, they turn their attention to Billy. Lying on the ground, Billy yells out in pain, crying for his mom and dad. The paramedics arrive, and as they load Billy into the ambulance, children completely surround the ambulance and Billy. Hackford asks

157 The specific line is “And the fact that I have no idea what William’s record is or if he even has one.” The wording reminds the audience of the conversation between Kojak and McNeil earlier in the episode when Kojak complained that he had no access to criminal records of children. By stating the he is placing Billy on probation partly because he does not know if Billy has a criminal record or not establishes validity to Kojak’s argument that laws meant to protect children cause harm to innocent citizens.

158 Taylor, Kojak, “Cry for the Kids.”

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid.
Kojak, “I didn’t kill the kid, did I?” Kojak responds, “Yes you did. A long time ago.” The episode ends with the children in the park pretending to shoot each other with finger guns as Kojak watches in disappointment.

Figure 2. A police officer in uniform holds Hackord as Kojak watches the paramedics load Billy into the ambulance. Crocker angrily faces Hackford just after he asked if he killed Billy. Source: Taylor, David. *Kojak*. Season 5, Episode 4, “Cry for the Kids.” Directed by Leo Penn. Original airdate October 23, 1977.

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162 Ibid.
“Cry for the Kids” poses an interesting dilemma for Kojak. Throughout the episode, he knows Billy killed a man but fails to bring Billy to justice because protective laws seal criminal records for minors. While Kojak continually complains that such laws allow criminals to freely roam the streets, he also recognizes that the adult gangsters are truly at fault. Kojak ultimately blames them for using Billy and turning him into a criminal. Also partially responsible for Billy’s criminal activity are his parents, namely his mother. They allow Billy to roam around New York City without a clear idea of where their son goes or what he does with his day. His mother fails to give her son the attention he needs and refuses to accept that her son could be a criminal, continually blaming the other kids. Kojak seems to focus on what he needs to do to keep New York City safe throughout the episode. He acknowledges that the gangster trapped Billy but also holds Billy responsible. Ultimately, the episode ends with the message that violence perpetuates violence. The children at the park stop playing on the jungle gym and start pretending to shoot guns at each other after they watched the shootout between Hackford, Billy, and the police. Much to Kojak’s dismay, more children were motivated to play violently. This episode adds to Kojak’s image as morally motivated and a protective figure, even if he could not save everyone.

Kojak represents the hyper-masculine. He is strong, a lady’s man, and willing to use force when necessary. However, his hyper-masculinity is kept in check by his rationality, reason, and commitment to justice. Morality and a desire to protect New York from dangerous criminals motivate Kojak to do his job well. Throughout the series, Kojak’s masculinity is contrasted from the masculinity of criminals, trigger-happy Daly, or the preditorial Hackford, who do not follow the same moral code as Kojak. They can be equally as strong as Kojak, but are problematic because they act selfishly and do not maintain the same level of self-control as Kojak. Women rarely occupy lead roles in *Kojak*. When they are present, they tend to either be hysterical or in need of protecting, as was the case with rape-victim Janet. Independent women, such as Billy’s mother, either pose a risk to themselves or their children, but Kojak is always there to save the day. This representation of women allows Kojak to appear tougher and more relevant. Because the women need his protection, his role is necessary.
CHAPTER 3

HAWAII FIVE-O

Detective Steve McGarrett, played by Jack Lord, heads up the special detective unit, Five-O, of the Hawaii Police Department in *Hawaii Five-O*. The Five-O operates independently of the Hawaiian police force, answering directly to the governor of Hawaii, Paul Jameson (Richard Denning). McGarrett is the head of the entire police department, and Five-O only takes the most interesting cases in the state. The widely successful show ran for twelve seasons from 1968-1980. Seven seasons of *Hawaii Five-O* ranked in the top twenty highest rated shows. In its most successful year (1972-1973), the show pulled in 16,329,600 viewers of the 64,800,000 households with televisions.

Leonard Freeman (1920-1974), writer and producer, is most famous for creating *Hawaii Five-O*, but he had a prolific career before this series. Most significantly, he co-wrote the 1968 movie starring Clint Eastwood, *Hang ’Em High*. Freeman originally decided to create a TV show set in Hawaii because his mother-in-law, who lived in Hawaii, wanted to see her daughter and Freeman more often. As a result, Freeman created *The Man*, which was renamed *Hawaii Five-O*.¹⁶⁶

The pilot TV movie, “Cocoon,” which premiered at Honolulu's Royal Theater in February 1968 and then later aired in two parts on CBS, established the show’s political message. The movie followed Steve McGarrett’s investigation of the murder of a U.S. 


¹⁶⁴ Ibid.


¹⁶⁶ Ibid.
intelligence agent. In the transition from pilot to TV show, many of the crimes Five-O investigated were along those lines. While much of the movie’s characteristics remained the same in the TV show, McGarrett’s character did change from quick-tempered to a cool-headed detective. However, as Brian Faucett and Ben Bethell write in Cop Shows, “his characteristic tenacity is, however, already apparent” in the series’ pilot. Another intelligence agent in the movie makes the comment that “everybody know that Steve McGarrett only takes orders from the Governor and God - and occasionally even they have trouble.” The team follows a variety of cases, but most commonly investigates murder and communist threats to the state.

Faucette and Bethell accurately explain that while McGarrett was “often labeled ‘fascist’ by would-be countercultural revolutionaries, Lord’s character still remains for many the archetypal Nixon-era ‘pig.’” However, they state that for “Freeman and the show’s writers, it was McGarrett’s compassion that set him apart from crime-fighting TV counterparts.” A significant portion of the episodes in this series shows McGarrett and his team fighting the communist menace. Because the focus of this chapter is on the masculinity represented, which is more pronounced in contrast to femininity, the episodes discussed in this chapter do not directly deal with fighting communism.

A great deal of McGarrett’s masculinity, however, derives from his commitment to American democracy. Considering the developing New Right united behind the anti-communism, this would have been effective to a significant proportion of American audiences. Most of the anti-communism is focused on Chinese Communism. Wo Fat is a recurring enemy who McGarrett encounters throughout the entire series, from the pilot TV

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168 Ibid.

169 Leonard Freeman, Hawaii Five-O, season 1, episode 0, “Cocoon,” directed by Paul Wendkos, original airdate September 20, 1968.

170 Faucette and Bethell, “Hawaii Five-O,” 77.

171 Ibid.
movie to the series final episode. In “The Jinn Who Clears the Way,” McGarrett actually apprehends Wo Fat, but the military decides to exchange Wo Fat for an American. In another episode, “Nine Dragons,” Wo Fat manages to kidnap McGarrett and take him to Hong Kong. McGarrett finally defeats Wo Fat in the final episode of the series, “Woe to Wo Fat.” While Chinese Communism is the focal point of anticommunism in the show, other forms of communism are not without attack. In “Savage Sunday,” discussed in the introduction, McGarrett stops communists from a generic Latin American country from stealing arms to contribute to the revolution. Further, the show represents counterculture activists as the antithesis of Americanism. In “Not That Much Different,” a young anti-war protester is murdered. While the title implies the young activists are the same as the military, ultimately the show implies they are worse. One of the activists is the murderer, who kills as a result of a power struggle. Ultimately, the show’s more politically conservative message opened the space for McGarrett’s masculinity to soften. He proved his masculinity through fighting communism, so he did not need as hyper-masculine of an image as Kojak.

Tall, with bright blue eyes, perfectly coiffed hair, and a prominent jaw, McGarrett is the prettiest of the three leading men. His image remained relatively constant throughout the twelve seasons on the air. The only noticeable change to McGarrett’s appearance was his ever-lengthening sideburns. McGarrett’s good looks and charm attract many women, but McGarrett remains single throughout the series. While his attractiveness tends to help soften his image, McGarrett has a very serious persona. His singular focus is to solve his case.


175 Thompson, *Hawaii Five-O*, “Savage Sunday.”

176 Mark Rodgers, *Hawaii Five-O*, season 1, episode 21, “Not That Much Different,” directed by Abner Biberman, original airdate March 5, 1969.
As opposed to Kojak, who technically has less power, but exerts more control, McGarrett allows his inferiors more freedom. He works most closely with Dan “Danno” Williams, played by Jack MacArthur. Danno left the show at the end of the eleventh season. Similar to Crocker in Kojak, Danno is younger and physically smaller than McGarrett. As a rookie cop in the first season, viewers watch Danno’s character develop. He tends to have more meaningful conversations with McGarrett but is still there to take orders. Most famously, almost every episode ends with McGarrett commanding, “Book him, Danno.”

Chin Ho Kelly (Kam Fong) and Kono Kalakaua (Gilbert “Zulu” Kauhi) also report to McGarrett, but work together. While more racially inclusive than most crime shows of the era, Chin Ho and Kono receive far less airtime and occupy less important investigatory roles than McGarrett and Danno. Additionally, the show worked to reinforce white hegemony in Hawaii. Nevertheless, like many of the characters who appeared on Hawaii Five-O, both Kam Fong and Zulu were from Hawaii. Kam Fong served in the Honolulu police department before transitioning to acting. Zulu was well known in Hawaii as a disc jockey and stand up comedian. However, in 1972 Zulu’s differences with Jack Lord led to his departure from the show. Wanting to keep a Native Hawaiian character on the show, Zulu was replaced by Al Harrington (actually Samoan), who played Detective Ben Kokua for three seasons. Detective Duke Lukela, played by Herman Wedemeyer, appeared intermittently throughout the series and took over the main role in season seven. By the final season, only Steve McGarrett remained from the show’s original team.

While Kojak deals with issues relevant to cities in 1970s America, the context of Hawaii allowed Hawaii Five-O to explore race and international politics. Filmed on location in Hawaii, the show’s beautiful scenery acts in contrast to the subject matter. As opposed

177 Faucette and Bethell, “Hawaii Five-O,” 77-79.
178 While CBS advertised the show as filmed entirely on location, Lincoln Haynes, the press secretary fired by Jack Lord complained that when he was first hired and moved to Hawaii, Jack Lord was filming two episodes in Los Angeles; Lincoln Haynes, “‘Just Do Your Job and Stay Loose!’ Famous Last Words to a press agent on his way to work,” TV Guide, February 3, 1973, accessed February 22, 2016, www.mjq.net/fivo/tv/feb73.htm.
to the dark and dingy representation of New York City, Hawaii is bright and beautiful. While McGarrett and his team investigate the most serious crimes, Hawaii’s lush vegetation and sandy beaches surround them. The show maintains the same level of seriousness as *Kojak*, but in contrast to its setting. Leonard Freedman, the show’s creator, even commented that the unifying theme of *Hawaii Five-O* “was man’s evil amid the beauty of paradise.”

One of the biggest draws to the *Hawaii Five-O* was its authenticity. Using Hawaiian scenery and the historic Ionian Palace, which was the state capital building until 1969, gave *Hawaii Five-O* a completely different level of realism.

Most of the kind of masculinity Steve McGarrett portrays on the show derived from Jack Lord’s personality. Jack Lord, born John Joseph Patrick Ryan (1920-1998), first became interested in acting through his role in the military. He served in Persia with the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the first year of American involvement in World War II. Then, he returned to the Merchant Marines, in which he made maritime training films. Before starring in *Hawaii Five-O*, Lord had a very successful television career. He was most famous for his lead role in *Stoney Burke*.

Like Telly Savalas, Lord had considerable power in creating the show. Before he agreed to star, Lord demanded ownership of the show. Ultimately, the producer, network, and Lord agreed to share ownership three ways. One disgruntled press agent, whom Jack Lord fired for refusing to pick him up from the airport, wrote that other members of the cast referred to him as “The Lord” in secret and that “The Lord made it clear that there was no co-star on *Hawaii Five-O*. There was just a star.”

A more favorable review of Lord during the show’s final season came to the same conclusion. Dick Kleiner, who also stated everyone in the state of Hawaii “considers him a friend,” wrote, “It really is *his* show. Over the years,

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179 Faucette and Bethell, “*Hawaii Five-O*,” 80.


181 Lord was also offered the lead role in *Star Trek*, but refused the role because his demand to have fifty percent ownership of the show was not met; Faucette and Bethell, “*Hawaii Five-O*,” 76.

182 Haynes, “‘Just Do Your Job and Stay Loose!’”
Jack has outlasted many producers, directors, and even heads of the networks, so he feels, with some justification, that he knows better than anyone how the show should be done and what makes it successful.”183 The character Steve McGarrett reflects Jack Lord’s desire to be the star of the show.

Throughout the series, McGarrett remains the focal point, usually performing the important actions and always dispensing valuable wisdom. His masculinity is tied to the protection he provides Hawaiian citizens and an American superiority complex. More significantly, McGarrett represents a masculine ideal in contrast to femininity and criminal masculinity. While suave enough to seduce women, McGarrett remains a bachelor. Fond of lecturing criminals, just like Kojak’s rants to his boss, McGarrett’s lectures represent masculine rationality and morality.

Just as in Kojak, the opening credits to Hawaii Five-O set the tone for the series. They begin by firmly placing the series within the context of Hawaii. Immediately establishing the series’ patriotism, blue waves crash on the beach before “Hawaii Five-O” appears on the screen in red and white letters. Images of Honolulu flash on the screen. The camera pauses on one building and pans up the skyscraper to reveal Steve McGarrett standing on the top balcony, lording over the city. With a close up image of his face, “starring Jack Lord” appears. The viewer then sees a series of masculine images in quick succession. Cars, women’s hips, jets, and the waves crashing at sunset all demonstrate McGarrett’s masculinity while reinforcing the tourist appeal of Hawaii. The credits finish by introducing the other main actors in the series. The men are given some credit, but they are clearly represented as separate from and inferior to McGarrett.

While Kojak never overtly rejected feminism, one particular episode of Hawaii Five-O directly addressed and dismissed feminism. Hawaii Five-O characterizes women as impulsive and emotional, whereas men are calculated and morally justified. Most episodes only followed the story arc of solving the crime. However, “The Cop of the Cover,” which

aired in 1977, diverges from the pattern and develops two story lines in order to respond to feminist claims. As one of the few episodes written by a woman (Anne Collins), it had potential. Collins was able to bring feminism into the conversation. However, with the show’s overarching conservative political message, she could not write a script that accepted feminism. The episode concludes by demonstrating the superficiality of feminist demands and showing that only McGarrett’s deliberate actions could keep everyone safe.

In “The Cop on the Cover,” the governor forces McGarrett to allow a reporter, Terri O’Brien from News World Magazine, to follow McGarrett on a case to write a story about Five-O. Already annoyed with the situation, McGarrett is shocked when he first meets O’Brien--a woman--as he assumed a reporter with the name Terri was a man. This first interaction sets up the episode to follow the tension between feminism and traditional masculinity. While the interactions between McGarrett and O’Brien are the focal point of the episode, Five-O is busy investigating a kidnapping of a scientist’s two children. This case is another example of crime television amplifying fears of the risks for unsupervised children that marked the decade. The scientist had already paid a ransom and his children are safe, but Five-O has yet to find the kidnappers.

Throughout the episode, O’Brien questions how McGarrett does his job. In one particular scene, she scolds him for pushing the parents of the kidnapped too far when he interrogates them. Playing up a contrast in gender identity, McGarrett feels justified because he has a job to do, while O’Brien wants him to be more sensitive to the victims’ feelings. She also questions his ground for suspicion of his primary suspect. McGarrett originally believed a man with a criminal record kidnapped the children. However, O’Brien continuously (and correctly) wonders if that man has been framed.

Halfway through the episode, O’Brien confronts McGarrett about his all-male unit in a particularly heated moment. This scene questions a patriarchal police force, but ultimately confirms its validity. As they sit directly across from each other at dinner in a fancy restaurant, O’Brien begins her interview by stating that “one thing puzzles me about Five-
Before she can finish her thought, McGarrett interrupts her: “Where’s the woman on the team?” McGarrett’s interjection allows him to take control of the conversation, forcing O’Hara to be more defensive. After a few sarcastic comments back and forth, McGarrett attempts to justify his department by explaining that women have often been involved in Five-O “operations.” O’Hara accurately describes female involvement as the menial jobs traditionally given to women in the office, such as “making coffee, filing reports, and answering the telephones.” At that point, McGarrett is clearly indignant. He calls her comment a “cheap shot,” leans in, and claims that “women have often handled dangerous assignments for Five-O, but bringing someone new in, male or female, untrained in our method of operation could seriously reduce our effectiveness. Seriously.” Here, McGarrett claims that he would not hire anyone new regardless of her or his gender because any new member would disrupt the quality of the team’s police work. In doing so, he is able to explain away hiring discrimination without actually addressing the truth that he has never hired a woman to work with Five-O.

McGarrett’s argument does not stop O’Hara from criticizing the patriarchal structure of police work. She calls Five-O a “private club,” and McGarrett fires back that “in no way, Five-O is a private club, but it is a tight, efficient organization. That’s why we’re effective.” O’Hara responds, “There are many women who could qualify for this outfit. Even run it. You’re just determined to keep it a private sanctuary.” With that comment, O’Hara gives McGarrett the ultimate insult. Clearly angry, McGarrett asks if she has “any

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185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
187 Ibid. This is especially ironic considering that Kono Kalakaua’s character was later replaced twice. Clearly, McGarrett had less trouble bringing men into Five-O; Ibid.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
candidates? Let me know and I’ll put them on the payroll immediately.” Here, McGarrett implies that women are not capable of his work. By placing the burden of finding a suitable candidate for the squad upon O’Brien, he implies that if a woman could do the work, they would already be a part of Five-O. At that point, before they have their meal, McGarrett refuses to continue their conversation. He asks a waiter for the check, and with another insult to his masculinity, O’Brien tells McGarrett that she will split the bill with him. McGarrett responds, “you really are exasperating, you know that?” The scene ends with some ambivalence about gender roles. O’Brien challenged McGarrett, but he provided arguments that would be convincing to an audience willing to accept dominant masculinity. However, O’Brien has the last word of the scene. Her ability to frustrate McGarrett gives her a certain level of power rarely afforded to women in Five-O.

By the end of the episode, all consideration for feminism is lost. Through her observations of the investigation, O’Brien actually solves the case first. However, when she determines who the true kidnappers are, she decides to visit them on her own rather than inform McGarrett. Once at the house of the kidnappers, she immediately realizes she walked into a dangerous situation. The man restrains her, ties her to the couch, and tapes her mouth shut. Luckily, McGarrett and his squad piece the case together shortly after, storm into the house, quickly disarm both kidnappers, and McGarrett tells Danno to “book them both, kidnapping and extortion.” Then, he walks over to the couch. As O’Brien squirms, waiting to be freed, McGarrett sits down, grabs her shoulders to still her, and uses her vulnerability to lecture her:

Now, Ms. O’Brien, perhaps I can get a word in without being interrupted, huh? I’d like to point out something, which you should already know. I’m told that one of the basic rules of journalism is to approach every story with an open mind, but on this one, yours has been closed from the beginning. Now to risk your life in

190 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
pursuit of a story is one thing, but to endanger the lives of others is something else. Now, we put our necks on the line everyday for things that count, but the crisis that you generated by coming here is absolutely unnecessary and just plain dumb and on that Ms. O’Brien you can quote me.193

With an allusion to feminism by referring to her with the title “Ms.,” McGarrett uses this moment to diminish all the feminist arguments O’Brien made throughout the episode. He begins by telling her how to do her own job and then explains how she risked not only her life, but also everyone in the operation. To McGarrett, her recklessness proved the point he made during dinner. Instead of leaving the investigative work to the trained professionals, she jeopardized everyone’s safety. The implication here is that she tried, but failed to prove women are capable of performing such a dangerous job. After lecturing her, McGarrett walks away, leaving Danno to untie her.

As if McGarrett’s lecture did not confirm his dominance, the final scene firmly reminds the audience of normative gender roles. O’Brien walks into McGarrett’s office, pushing a table set for a romantic dinner. The final image of the episode shows McGarrett pouring her a glass of champagne, benevolently smiling down upon her. The episode began with an independent woman in a respectable job, questioning the gender hierarchy. By the end, her role has reversed completely. Instead of demonstrating that a journalist, who has no prior police experience, should not try to interfere with a police investigation, the final scene suggests her incompetence has to do with her gender. Only men can handle the dangers of police work, while women belong as romantic interests for men.

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193 Ibid.
While the episode ends with O’Brien as just another love interest, the audience has no illusions that any sort of romantic relationship will form between McGarrett and O’Brien. The series continually establishes that to be effective police officers, the men of Five-O must remain unattached. Love interests rarely appear on the show. When they do, they never last long, and generally end disastrously. In one episode, “Time and Memories,” McGarrett investigates the murder of a former girlfriend’s husband.\textsuperscript{194} At the conclusion of the episode, McGarrett actually discovers that her daughter’s fiancé committed the murder. It proved

difficult for McGarrett to act objectively because of his feelings for his past love, but he was able to overcome his emotions and act rationally. His feelings for his ex-girlfriend show a different side to McGarrett’s masculinity. As Rhodes, author of *Booking Hawaii Five-O*, writes, McGarrett “drew” in fans with “his toughness, his tenacity, his unswerving loyalty, his honesty and, along with these manly traits, his vulnerability.”\(^{195}\) Mostly, they appreciated his traditionally masculine characteristics, but this softer piece to his masculinity humanized McGarrett for audiences.

In another episode, “Beautiful Screamer,” Danno has a fiancée, but her friend’s husband murders her.\(^{196}\) Danno is temporarily distracted by the loss of his fiancée, but he quickly refocuses his energy on solving the murder. The moral is that women cannot distract a clear-headed cop. While the men are able to ignore emotions and do their job, true relationships are too distracting. The show allows for short romances to create a lady’s man image for the main characters, but love prevents the men from doing their job.

A few episodes showed women as police officers, but when they appeared, the show reminded the audience how much more dangerous police work was for women than men. For example, in the first episode of the series, “Full Fathom Five,” a female police officer, Joyce, goes undercover as a wealthy widow.\(^{197}\) A man had been seducing single, wealthy, women, convincing them to transfer all their money into his bank account and then murdering them. Joyce acted as bait to catch the murderer. Throughout the episode, Danno argues with McGarrett over Joyce’s position. He tells McGarrett that he knows Joyce and her two children personally and does not want them to suffer. While McGarrett responds to Danno’s concern by telling him “no one asked you,” McGarrett eventually gives Joyce the opportunity

\(^{195}\) Rhodes, *Booking*, 253; Page 18 of this thesis contains a more developed explanation of Rhodes work.


\(^{197}\) Ken Kolb, *Hawaii Five-O*, season 1, episode 1, “Full Fathom Five,” directed by Richard Benedict, original airdate 1968.
to abort her mission, saying he “couldn’t live with myself if anything happened to you.”

When Joyce agrees to continue with her undercover job, McGarrett and other Five-O members occupy the hotel room next to her, so they can respond in a moment’s notice if needed. When male police officers put themselves in risky situations, there is little discussion about their safety. The danger is simply part of the job. Joyce, however, needs special protection because she is a woman. Even more significantly, she has two children, establishing that even though she is a police officer, her primary identity remains a mother. McGarrett maintains his hero role because he allows Joyce to do her job, while providing extra protection. As protector, he reminds viewers that police work is ultimately men’s work. As a strong, composed officer, he remains there to save Joyce if she finds herself in danger.

The show complicated its message concerning women in the police force a couple of years after “The Cop on the Cover.” The second episode of the final season in 1979, “Who Says Cops Don’t Cry?” ends with McGarrett allowing a woman to join his team. While this seems like a progressive move for the exclusive Five-O, the episode also reinforces McGarrett’s superiority and the woman’s need to control her emotions to be a part of Five-O.

It opens with a husband and wife, Kevin and Lori, driving into town as Kevin enthusiastically tells his wife about his new position in Five-O. Excited to report to McGarrett, Kevin tells Lori “he said when you’re certain you’re right about something, don’t take no for an answer, not from anyone, I’ll back you all the way up to the governor’s mansion. And that’s the gospel according to McGarrett.” From this opening scene, the audience is reminded of McGarrett’s power. Not only is he characterized as a perfect boss, but he also has the ability to persuade the governor of the state.

Kevin never experiences McGarrett as a boss. Shortly after their conversation, Lori and Kevin witness a robbery. Both of them are police officers, so they engage in a shootout

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198 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
with the robbers. The robbers shoot and kill Kevin. With a position open in Five-O, Lori asks McGarrett if she could take Kevin’s spot. As he escorts her to a car following her husband’s funeral, McGarrett responds, “When this is all over, we’ll talk about it. Right now you are too upset to be objective.”201 Questioning his reasoning, Lori asks, “is it because I’m unable to function objectively as a widow or is it because I’m a woman and you’ve never had a woman on Five-O?”202 Of course, McGarrett denies her accusations, but ultimately, he paints Lori as overly emotional. He allowed male police officers to investigate the murders of loved ones in the past, so even if he will not admit it to Lori, his argument that Lori is too emotional following the death of her husband is gendered. Masculinity is continually represented as reasonable and objective. Whereas Lori is characterized by her inability to act in the wake of her husband’s death, men are shown separating emotions from their work.203

Lori wants to help find the men who killed her husband, but McGarrett refuses to allow her to participate. As a result, Lori begins an investigation of her own. By the end of the episode, Lori and McGarrett independently track down the criminals. While McGarrett goes after two of the robbers, Lori surprises one in his car. Sitting behind him, she points her gun to his head. After a dramatic pause, McGarrett orders one of his men to book him and the man is removed from the car. Crying, Lori realizes she almost murdered someone out of vengeance. She exits the car, hugs McGarrett, and thanks him. Still submitting to McGarrett through her embrace, McGarrett asks Lori what made her change her mind. She explains that it was “something you once said. You said, ‘Kevin wouldn’t have done it this way’ and you were right.”204 Basically, her dead husband’s and McGarrett’s rationality stopped her from acting out based upon her emotions. McGarrett uses this opportunity to tell Lori that he

201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
203 For example, in the episode “Beautiful Screamer,” (mentioned on the previous page) Danno’s fiancée is murdered. While McGarrett pays lip service to idea of making Danno take some vacation time early, he eventually allows Danno to take the lead on investigating the murder. Danno is eventually the one to solve the case, arrest the murderer, and save another woman from death.
204 James, Hawaii Five-O, “Who Says Cops Don’t Cry?”
decided to hire her, saying “I guess I’m going to have to be very careful of what I say around you from now on.” This comment is innocent and playful, but also maintains McGarrett’s influence over her. Even though he is accepting her onto his team, McGarrett establishes his control, reinforcing his masculine superiority. When she realizes McGarrett is telling her she can join Five-O, she hugs him excessively and says, “oh Steve. I’m so...I’m so grateful.” Her reaction reminds the audience that her new role in Five-O results from McGarrett kindness, not necessarily her skill as a police officer. Of the final season’s nineteen episodes, Lori appeared in ten.

Other episodes of *Hawaii Five-O* dealt with issues closely related to 1970s American cities. McGarrett has to stop a developing war between a mob boss and the pimps in Honolulu's “Trick City” in the season six episode, “Tricks Are Not Treats,” which aired in 1973. With mob violence, prostitution, and black masculinity, the episode perpetuated fears of urban decay. The show opens with a group of black pimps drinking in a bar, complaining that Lolo Kensi, the local mob boss, plans to raise his taxes on them. When one of them, J. Paul, leaves the bar, he banters with a police officer writing him a parking ticket. As the police officer gives him the ticket, he jokes that it is just another one for his collection. This opening scene sets up the pimps as deviant with their complete disrespect for the law, but also humanizes them as the police officer and J. Paul clearly have a friendly relationship.

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205 Ibid.
206 Ibid.
After their encounter, J. Paul is murdered. While the emerging war is over Lolo’s tax increase, this murder, clearly ordered by Lolo, ignites the conflict.

At the scene of the murder, McGarrett interviews another pimp, Harley. Questioning Harley’s lack of emotion, McGarrett comments that Harley is “pretty cool about losing a brother,” to which Harley responds “Mr. McGarrett, see when you’re black and a producer, the whole world is made of glass. As we are on display where anybody can tag us at any time.”209 This one line seems to acknowledge how race and class would oppress Harley in a way McGarrett could not understand, but most of the episode simply characterizes the pimps as criminals who do not deserve any empathy. The war escalates with two more deaths after Lolo sends one of his men to inform the pimps that his tax has increased to a thirty-five percent commission. Following these deaths, the pimps decide to call in a hitman from Detroit to kill Lolo.

In a scene that plays on the various fears of crime’s threat to children, Harley’s wife, Semantha, begs him to avoid a war with Lolo. Semantha, a blonde, white woman, in an all pink outfit, takes care of their children while working as a receptionist for her husband. In between scheduling “tricks” for Harley, she tells her kids to eat all their vegetables. The irony of conducting a prostitution business while parenting their children sends the message that Harley and Semantha are deviant criminals subjecting their innocent children to their prostitution business. After taking a call from McGarrett, Semantha begs Harley to pay Lolo’s tax. She says, “Harley, Harley, those kids aren’t part of the game...It’s us. Harley, I’d rather go back on the street than have you call Detroit.”210 In response, Harley aggressively clenches her crying face, as he reminds her of her role: “You said it right lady. You are my wife. On the for real side and here is where you will stay, wife.”211 While Harley's character

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209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
contributes to the trope of dangerous black hyper-masculinity, Semantha refuses to obey. Once Harley leaves, she calls McGarrett to inform him of Harley’s plan to hire a hitman.

 McGarrett, trying to prevent any more violence, goes to see Lolo. Threatening to arrest him, McGarrett orders Lolo to get on his yacht and leave Hawaii. While McGarrett scares Lolo, he ultimately chooses to remain in Hawaii. In a series of plot twists that work to reinforce the chaotic nature of gang association, Lolo’s own hitman kills the Detroit hitman before he can kill Lolo. However, this gives Lolo a false sense of security. His second-in-command conspired with Harley to kill him to take over the mob and lower the tax rate back down to twenty-five percent. McGarrett, as always, pieces their plan together and rushes to save Lolo, who went to the bar where the pimps gather to revel in their failure. As he is leaving the bar, McGarrett drives up and tells Lolo he wants to save his life, instructing him to go back inside. Lolo’s arrogance prevents him from listening to McGarrett. He puts his hands up, and, while asking how McGarrett could possibly save his life, the hitman shoots and kills him. Harley justifies his actions by asking “McGarrett, man you really think anyone would call the wasting of Lolo a crime, huh?” McGarrett replies that he had a “well executed plan. Very well executed. Too well as a matter of fact” and then turns to Chin Ho, and just like the end of every episode, tells him to “book them, all of them.”

 Throughout the entire episode, McGarrett is more interested in stopping the escalating violence between the two parties than arresting anyone. Jack Lord once responded to audience complaints that Hawaii Five-O was too violent by arguing, “What we’re trying to say is, violence begets violence, that nothing is ever solved by violence.” Nevertheless, McGarrett continually resorts to violence throughout the series. He continually claims to prevent violence, but many criminals are left dead before he has a chance to tell Danno to “book ‘em.” McGarrett often brandishes his gun. McGarrett’s gun acts a surrogate penis to

212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.
214 Rhodes, Booking, 14.
215 This is exemplified by his conversation with Acuna in “Savage Sunday,” the episode discussed on page
reinforce his masculinity. Beyond the imagery of a gun ejaculating bullets to penetrate another’s body, the weapon proves McGarrett’s dominance through his ability to take the life of another away.

By the end of the episode, all of the criminals are either dead or behind bars. Ultimately, the law always prevails and McGarrett gets the last word. When the episode opened, it seemed like the pimps had free reign to conduct their illegal businesses. The mob had control over them, and the police knew of their activity, but did little to stop it. By the end, everything changed. McGarrett spends the episode trying to prevent as much violence as possible, but ultimately the episode implies that the criminals cannot stop themselves. While throughout the episode it seemed like “Trick City” might be a place McGarrett could not control, by the end he is in complete power.

McGarrett’s masculinity is represented as a middle ground between Kojak and Columbo. In many ways, he is similar to Kojak. They are both morally motivated protectors of the law who also became sex symbols during the decade. McGarrett also has a tailored image that rivals Kojak. However, whereas Kojak continually criticizes the system, McGarrett works to justify it. He fights communism and protects Hawaii for its citizens and the tourists. Even if he may overstate his pacifist role, he reminds criminals that he is there to prevent violence, as exemplified by his de-escalation of the gang war. McGarrett is equally as prone to diatribe as Kojak, but his take the form of a lecture. Kojak tends to complain about how the system works against him doing his job to his boss. McGarrett uses every opportunity to lecture criminals on how and why their actions are wrong, such as his discussions with Lolo and Harvey. In some cases, he lectures innocent citizens who interfere with his administration of justice, such as Terri O’Brien. While McGarrett is slightly softer, the most important components to his masculinity are his rationality and control.

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CHAPTER 4

COLUMBO

Figure 5. Lieutenant Columbo. Source: Bochco, Steven. Columbo. Season 1, Episode 1, “Murder by the Book.” Directed by Steven Spielberg. Original airdate September 15, 1971.
Columbo follows homicide detective for the Los Angeles Police Department, Lieutenant Columbo (Peter Falk). As a part of NBC Mystery Movie, Columbo appeared in rotation with McCloud, McMillan and Wife, and in later years, Hec Ramsey, Amy Prentiss, McCoy, or Quincy, M.E. Because it aired on television less frequently, Columbo could challenge the established crime TV format more aggressively. As a result of this rotating format, specific ratings for Columbo are difficult to track. Nevertheless, large audiences tuned in to watch the NBC Mystery Movie. In the seven seasons that Columbo aired in rotation, NBC Mystery Movie had top twenty ratings for four years.216 The series maximized their viewership in the 1973-1974 season with 14,590,500 viewers.217

The TV writer and producer team responsible for Mannix and McCloud, Richard Levinson (1934-1987) and William Link (1933-), conceived of the character Columbo as early as the late 1950s.218 The character, played by Bert Freed, first appeared in a 1960 episode of The Chevy Mystery Show. They then adapted the episode for their Broadway play, Prescription Murder, in which Thomas Mitchell played Columbo.219

Episodes ran longer, generally filling a ninety-minute time slot, as opposed to the normal hour. With extra time, the show changed the narrative format. In shows like Kojak and Hawaii Five-O, viewers may have watched part of the crime at the beginning of the episode, but discovered more details as the investigators discovered them. Columbo, however, rarely appeared before the twenty-minute mark in any particular episode. The audience watched the entire murder, complete with a back-story, before Columbo even began his investigation. Additionally, Columbo did not have opening credits. His dominance of the


217 Ibid.


219 Ibid.
show did not need to be established in the beginning of the episode, which added to the game Columbo played with his suspects. Whereas Kojak and McGarrett have full team of detectives ready to take their orders, Columbo solved every case alone. Uniformed police officers appear for the initial crime scene investigation, but rarely contribute any relevant information. In fact, they often underestimate Columbo as much as the criminals, usually assuming a civilian is trying to interfere before Columbo finally remembers to show his badge.

The flipped format gave viewers more confidence in Columbo. He pretends to be gullible and forgetful, allowing his primary suspects to believe that they are misleading him until he has enough evidence to force a confession. As Roger Sabin writes, “The joy was in watching him play a psychological game with his suspect, encouraging the little lies that cover the bigger lies that cover the murder, in order to finally trap his prey.” The audience is allowed to enjoy this game because they are let in on the secrets from the very beginning of the episode.

Whereas Kojak is physically intimidating and McGarrett is pretty, Columbo is frumpy. He always wears a wrinkled beige raincoat on over his suit, drives a 1959 Peugeot 403 convertible that becomes increasingly more damaged throughout the series, consistently refers to his wife, and almost always has a cigar hanging out of his mouth. He has a glass eye, perpetually wrinkled forehead, and only stands at five foot six inches tall. Outwardly, Columbo is unimpressive, but his image works to his advantage and adds to the characteristic that made his suspects underestimate him. However, William Link, one of the shows co-creators said, “Falk is also very likable. Women like him. A lot of women find him sexy. And men like him, so he’s got that double. Also he brought a humanity to it.”

220 Ibid., 67.
221 Ibid.
The setting of Los Angeles and Colombo’s specialization as a homicide detective made the show unique. While *Kojak* and *Hawaii Five-O* addressed issues that weighed heavily on the national conscious, the murderers in *Columbo* seemed less threatening. *Columbo* intentionally ignored the realism trend in crime TV. Sabin argues, “With this fantasy aura comes the banishing of anything resembling ‘real’ politics. Columbo’s creators always rejected an interpretation of the working-class-cop-in-middle-class-surrounding scenario as a subversive attack on the American class system.”\(^{223}\) As opposed to the two other shows, in which the criminals are either working-class or political dissenters, the murderers in *Columbo* are affluent.\(^ {224}\) Even though the show avoided overt politics, the murderers’ class seems to be a criticism of elite amorality.

*Columbo*’s ratings and longevity demonstrate the success of this unorthodox cop show. The show’s ratings did not fall dramatically in its final season, as with most shows that are canceled. The show ended in 1978 because Falk, an actor truly dedicated to his craft, felt that he could not take the character any further and decided to pursue other projects. However, *Columbo* was resurrected for special episodes that appeared periodically from 1989 to 2003.\(^ {225}\)

Similar to Savalas and Lord, Peter Falk (1968-2003) exerted a great deal of control over the show. As a method actor who had success in movies, Falk was initially suspicious of television.\(^ {226}\) While filming *Columbo*, he continued to act in low budget art films that he financed with his *Columbo* earnings.\(^ {227}\) Ultimately, his role as Columbo is how audiences remember him. In many ways, Falk played himself. He represented his own brand of masculinity that was less dominating and polished than his counterparts in *Kojak* and *Hawaii Five-O*. Steven Bochco, who went on to write *NYPD Blue, Hill Street Blues*, and *L.A. Law*,

\(^{223}\) Sabin, “Columbo,” 68.

\(^{224}\) Ibid.

\(^{225}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{226}\) Ibid., 69.

\(^{227}\) Ibid.
wrote seven episodes for *Columbo* in the first few seasons of the show. Levinson and Link continually rewrote his scripts because he overwrote the character. He remembers Levinson telling him, “‘Peter Falk is Columbo.’ He said, ‘you don’t have to write all of that stuff because that’s Peter. You don’t have to write Peter because Peter is Peter.’” Link said that Falk had the same “idiosyncratic characteristics” of Columbo. He was forgetful, sloppy, and just as obsessive with his acting as Columbo was with solving his case. That obsession drew a lot of respect from the industry but drove a lot of people away from the show. Abby Singer worked as a production manager for three episodes early in the series. When the producers asked him to work on more, he refused because Falk “was nuts. Probably the nicest guy in the world...but when it came to shooting, he was crazy.” John A. Martinelli, who quit editing the show after a couple episodes, gave more detail about Falk’s perfectionist nature: “We start a movie, we shoot half of it and Peter Falk doesn’t like the ending. Throw it away, start a new movie. Now start a new one.” Falk and his accountant did the research and knew everyone would make a great deal of money off the show even when he delayed production, and forced it to go far over budget, so these complaints never phased him.

While most agreed Falk was difficult to work with, they also respected his perspective. Link knew Falk only wanted to ensure the script was perfect. Others agreed

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229 Link, August 23, 2002.

230 Ibid.


234 Link, August 23, 2002.
that Falk tended to be right. In the episode “Murder in Malibu,” Falk insisted on including a clue he invented into the episode. That clue turned out to be the one that enabled him to solve the case.  

After filming one episode from three in the afternoon to two the in the morning, Falk realized that he did not like that Columbo’s and the guest star’s (Walter Koenig) explanations for the murder were too similar, so he stopped filming and told production that Koenig needed new lines. Koenig told him to give him “the gist and I’ll improvise it.” Koenig remembers the scene as very successful. Ultimately, Falk put in the same level of effort that he expected from his guest stars and production team. Hector Elizondo guest-starred on an episode in 1975. As opposed to Elizondo’s impression of Savalas as too controlling, Falk surprised Elizondo with his work ethic. At that point, Falk could have been coasting through filming, but “he was still practicing the character off camera, talking to himself, with the cigar, with the rumpled up raincoat.”

Columbo occupies a liminal space. In many ways, Columbo subverts normative masculinity. He is not strong and polished, but short and frumpy. The phallic imagery of the cigar that continually hangs out of his mouth also questions his masculinity. Just as Kojak’s lollipop, his cigar reduces Columbo to an oral phase. The cigar, however, is at least a masculine, rather than childish object usually reserved for men. Kojak and McGarrett continually find themselves in dangerous situations where they need to resort to violence. Columbo, in contrast, never carries a weapon or uses violence. Always writing his observations down, Columbo does not exude the same collected confidence of Kojak and McGarrett. Whereas the other two leading men are perpetual bachelors that never struggle to attract women, Columbo often makes reference to a mysterious wife the audience never

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237 Ibid.

238 Hector Elizondo, interview.
His appearance, forgetfulness, and wife all work together to create a very different form of manhood. Generally, a dowdy image would not seem like a masculine ideal. The wife contradicts the traditional image of the bachelor cop. Kojak and McGarrett often express their masculinity through their ability to attract women. Columbo usually mentions his wife in ways that reflect an equal partnership. For example, in “Old Fashioned Murder,” discussed later in this chapter, he mentions his wife was sick, so he was up all night. In “Requiem for a Falling Star,” Columbo is star-struck by the movie star he is investigating, but focuses on how his wife would feel. He tries to get his wife on the phone so the movie star can “just say hello,” explaining, “It’d giver her a tremendous thrill. I mean she saw every picture you’ve ever been in ever since she was a kid. I mean, ever since high school.”

However, these characteristics also reinforce a normative masculinity. Columbo misleads murderers precisely because he does not represent the masculinity one would expect from a police officer. This reminds audiences of what true masculinity should be in contrast to Columbo. More significantly, Columbo remains in control of his investigations despite appearances. In each episode, it seems that Columbo does not know what he is doing, but in reality his actions and questions are calculated. Similar to Kojak and McGarrett, Columbo has complete control. He just achieves it through detailed observations and intelligence.

One of the first episodes of Columbo trivializes femininity as much as it glorifies masculinity. “Dead Weight” aired on October 27, 1971. It begins with a retired marine, General Hollister, in a bathrobe, packing away his “military souvenirs” to be permanently

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239 However, Mrs. Kate Columbo did get a two season spin-off series, Mrs. Columbo. Kate Mulgrew plays Mrs. Columbo, a crime-solving reporter raising a daughter. In the second season, she divorces Lieutenant Columbo and changes her name.


displayed in Memorial Hall.\textsuperscript{243} That evening, he will be honored for the 20th anniversary of his retirement. While the General is packing his memorabilia, Colonel Dutton arrives at his house. After a brief confrontation, the General shoots Dutton to ensure their embezzlement remains secret. Meanwhile, a young woman and her mother are sailing on the water next to the General’s house. The young woman, Helen Stewart, witnesses the murder, but her mother was looking away. Immediately, her mother dismisses her daughter’s assertion that she saw the General shoot a man, telling her that she “had been in the sun too long.”\textsuperscript{244} When Helen reports the crime to the police, she belittles herself, looking down and saying, “Well, um, this man in a bathrobe, uh, he shot another man i-in a uniform.”\textsuperscript{245} When the police officer questions her on what kind of uniform he was wearing, she looks up at him somewhat submissively and, as she fidgets with her hands, responds, “oh, well, I...I can’t tell the difference between an usher and a mailman. I mean, I can tell them apart, but not what they’re wearing, you know?”\textsuperscript{246} From these first few scenes, the only eyewitness is characterized as incompetent. Neither her mother nor Mrs. Stewart take herself seriously. Furthermore, when the police officer realizes that Mrs. Stewart accused General Hollister, a war hero, of murder, he doubts that she is telling the truth. Rather than accuse a well-respected man of murder, the police officer waits for Lt. Columbo to arrive.

After questioning the General and looking around his house, Columbo arrives at Mrs. Stewart’s house. While it is not clear at this point in the episode whether Columbo believes a murder occurred, he is much more willing to question Mrs. Stewart than General Hollister. When he left the General’s house, Columbo told him “I think I’m on a wild-goose chase. Matter of fact, uh, I don’t think there’s much else I can, uh, look for, General.”\textsuperscript{247} Once at Mrs. Stewart’s, Columbo interrogates her. He explains that she is accusing a respected

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{243} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{247} Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
military general of murder and questions her eyesight and whether or not she had been drinking that afternoon. After the last question, Mrs. Stewart loses her temper and begins to yell, “I mean, that police officer this afternoon, and then my mother, and now -- I am not hallucinating!”248 Because Hollister is well respected as a general, no one wants to believe Mrs. Stewart, even though she is right. However, from the perspective of the Columbo and the police, her frustrated outburst reinforces the belief that she is misguided. After screaming to Columbo what she saw, she asks if he believes her, and the scene ends before Columbo can reply. Of course, this is the game Columbo plays. He intentionally allows his suspect to believe they are safe from his suspicions. Part of his method is to make the suspect believe they are leading Columbo astray, which actually gives Columbo more power to manipulate the suspect into a confession. However, in the first few scenes, Columbo clearly wishes to believe the General over an ‘irrational’ woman.

Shortly after Columbo leaves Mrs. Stewart’s house, General Hollister arrives. Mrs. Stewart’s mother answers the door, and the moment she tells her daughter that a man is there to see her, Mrs. Stewart’s face brightens. The General explains that she accused him of murder earlier in the day and that “I’m sure you’ll agree that, uh, you’ve miscast me as murderer.”249 Mrs. Stewart looks down submissively in response, ashamed that she accused such a charming man of murder. While Columbo continues to investigate, General Hollister works to convince Mrs. Stewart she was mistaken.

Mrs. Stewart quickly becomes completely enamored with the General. She and Columbo reverse positions on whether or not General Hollister killed anyone. By the end of the episode, Colonel Dutton’s body had been found and Columbo pieced together the case. Rather than immediately arresting General Hollister, Columbo invites Mrs. Stewart to meet him at the exhibit displaying the General’s memorabilia. He begins by showing her a journal that saved the General’s life when someone shot him to prove the General had life

248 Ibid.
249 Ibid.
experiences that would make him capable of murder. Columbo goes on to show her how much the General saved throughout his life, leading up to the explanation of how he solved the case. Hollister previously claimed that a gun important to his career had been stolen, and the one in the museum was just a duplicate. However, once the General arrives at the museum Columbo explains:

I find it hard to believe that a man like General Hollister who saved and cherished every war souvenir—even the smallest photograph—I just think it’s strange that he was so careless as to allow his gun to be stolen. I mean, that pistol was the most famous single symbol of his whole legend...if it was my gun I would take very good care of that gun. I’d have it in my apartment where people could see it and I would keep it polished...And when a certain Colonel Dutton came to see me and threatened to expose me, that’s the gun that I would use...Where is the gun? Why not on public display? Why not in a glass case? Why not in front of thousands of people? And after we found Colonel Dutton’s body, anybody else--you, me, anybody else--We’d have gotten rid of that gun. We found that bullet in the victim and the ballistics check will match up the bullet with the gun. But somehow, General, something told me that you could never get rid of that gun.250

As with every episode, Columbo describes his process in solving the case. In doing so, he asserts his logical superiority over the murderer. General Hollister, like most of Columbo’s suspects, believes the image Columbo creates for himself. However, they always submit to arrest willingly because Columbo cleverly reasons why they must have committed the murder. In this ending monologue, his masculinity is also constructed in relation to Mrs. Stewart. He has no reason to explain to her the General committed the murder other than to prove he was right. He treats Mrs. Stewart as a misguided, overly emotional woman both at the beginning of the episode, when she correctly accuses General Hollister of murder, and at the end, when he convinces her that she had been mistaken. In contrast, when Columbo questioned the validity of Mrs. Stewart’s accusations, he was simply doing his job carefully.

250 Ibid.
While Mrs. Stewart represents a woman who fails to control her emotions, a few episodes do represent women as more calculated. In fact, women commit a significant number of the murders. In the season six episode, “Old Fashioned Murder,” the female curator of a family run museum, Ruth, kills her brother and the security guard after her brother threatens to sell the museum. While Columbo prevails by the end of the episode, Ruth catches onto the game Columbo plays relatively early. At one point, she tells Columbo, “Lieutenant, you must never underestimate me. Or I you. I don’t in the least mind you playing tricks, but you are going to have to be a little clever, aren’t you?” While Ruth appears intelligent, she is also characterized as emotionally damaged. Her parents died when she was a young girl, and when she was a young woman her fiancé left her to marry her sister.

Women have more independence in *Columbo*, but that often leads them to commit acts like murder. In another episode, a former movie star accidentally kills her secretary in an attempt to murder a gossip columnist who had been blackmailing her. Throughout the episode, Columbo fawns over her because he is a big fan, but ultimately she is represented as a problematic woman because she has too much power. Columbo’s masculinity is softer than Kojak and McGarrett. This opens a space for women to gain more power, but as a result, they are represented as conniving and villainous. The show essentially suggests that as women step outside of their traditional roles, they become evil.

Most of the murders in *Columbo* occur over arguments about money. In “Any Old Port in the Storm,” two half-brothers, Adrian and Ric Carsini, fight over what to do with their money. Money can be traced as the underlying cause of almost all murders in *Columbo*. Some examples of this include the murders in the episode just discussed in “Requiem for a Falling Star” and “Dead Weight,” as well as “The Bye-Bye Sky High I.Q. Murder Case” and “Murder by the Book.” The murder in “Dead Weight,” occurs because the General does the want the Colonel to reveal their embezzlement; *Columbo*, “Dead Weight.” Similar to “Dead Weight,” in “The Bye-Bye Sky High I.Q. Murder Case,” a member of a society dedicated to brilliant people, murders another member because he threatened to reveal his embezzlement; *Columbo*, season 6,
vineyard. When their father died, Ric inherited the property and Adrian received money. However, Adrian is the true wine connoisseur who runs the vineyard. When Ric appears in his office one day to ask for money and inform his half-brother he plans to sell the vineyard, Adrian hits him on the head with a telephone. Later, Adrian moves his unconscious brother into his wine cellar, restrains him, turns off the air conditioner, and leaves him to die. Adrian had already planned a weeklong trip to New York, so while his brother slowly dies in the cellar, Adrian enjoys a wine convention across the country. Once back in Los Angeles, Adrian attempts to stage his brother’s death as a scuba diving accident. He dresses Ric in scuba gear, throws him into the ocean, and leaves Ric’s convertible with the top down nearby.

After visiting the scene where Ric was found, Columbo is sitting at a bar watching a news reporter interview the doctor who examined the body. The doctor explains that their “preliminary examination shows that Mr. Carsini died of suffocation six days ago, rather than drowning. We found evidence of a sharp blow to the head.” In an perfect example of how Columbo demonstrates his attention for detail in rather quirky ways, he turns to the stranger sitting next to him and makes him reiterate multiple times that Ric died last Tuesday. He asks the same man, and then the bartender, if it rained last Tuesday (six days ago). Because neither of the men knows, he somewhat frantically uses a pay phone to call the weather bureau.

In the next scene, Columbo arrives to investigate at the vineyard. Throughout most of the episode, he allows Adrian to feel in control. While asking questions, Columbo has a skill for making the suspect believe they are just there to help him piece together what happened,

episode 3, “The Bye-Bye Sky High I.Q. Murder Case,” directed by Sam Wanamaker, original airdate May 22, 1977. In “Murder by the Book,” the talented member of a murder mystery writing team wants to start working independently. Because the other member knows his financial success is dependent upon his partner, he kills him. Clearly, the murders are not always that well thought out; Columbo, season 1, episode 2, “Murder by the Book,” directed by Steven Spielberg, original airdate September 15, 1971.


256 Ibid.
not because Columbo suspects them. However, Columbo continues to interrogate his suspect throughout the episode, and his frustration with Columbo increases. In this case, Columbo is very focused on the details of the weather. In his first conversation with Adrian, he asks why would Ric “bother go swimming on a rainy day” like last Tuesday.\textsuperscript{257} In a later conversation, he asks if Adrian remembers, “How the convertible top was?”

Taking out his notebook, Columbo says, “I’m not very good on details. That’s why I write everything down.” As he often does, Columbo fumbles through his notebook, trying to find his notes on the car. He explains, “uh, my handwriting is so bad, sometimes I think I should have been a doctor.”\textsuperscript{258} In this scene, Columbo is in the foreground, appearing below and much smaller than his suspect. This visual shrinking of Columbo reverses trends established in \textit{Kojak} and \textit{Hawaii Five-O}. While he appears in a less dominant position, Columbo asks about the convertible. If the top actually had been down when it rained, there would be damage to the car. Rather than straightforwardly questioning his suspect, Columbo uses the opportunity to present himself as incompetent. He has a great eye for detail, but claims to need his notebook. As he awkwardly flips through though his notes, he insults himself again, but about his penmanship. At this point, Adrian still believes Columbo is not a capable enough investigator to determine that he is the murderer.

Meanwhile, Karen, the secretary, realizes Adrian killed Ric, lied to Columbo. She uses this information to trap Adrian into a raise and marriage, which adds to the image of women in \textit{Columbo} as conniving. Not only is she manipulative, but also she plots to marry a know fratricide, which questions her sanity.

\textsuperscript{257} Ibid.\textsuperscript{258} Ibid.

Adrian’s downfall is his obsession with wine. Toward the end of the episode, Columbo calls Adrian to apologize, saying, “I feel like I’ve made a fool of myself. No, there was one thing that was bothering me...I’m really calling you to apologize for giving you such a hard time...I want to make it up to you. I want to buy you and Karen a meal in the best
restaurant in town.” Once again, Columbo allows his suspect to feel in control. In reality, Columbo plans to use the dinner to force a confession out of Adrian. He already knows that Adrian trapped Ric in the cellar prior to dumping the body in the ocean. After finishing the entire meal, Columbo orders a very expensive dessert wine that he had secretly taken from Adrian’s cellar and given to the waiter to serve. When the waiter serves the wine, Adrian explodes in a fit of rage, yelling, “don’t you realize that a great wine is like a great work of art? It has to be nurtured. It has to be taken care of. You have subjected this port to a temperature in excess of one hundred and fifty degrees.” Adrian continues on with his lecture on proper wine storage, advises Columbo not to pay the bill, and storms out of the restaurant.

The wine came from Adrian’s cellar and overheated because he turned off the air conditioner when he left his brother to die. At this point, he does not know that the wine at dinner came from his cellar, but realizes that all of his wine spoiled while he was away. Columbo finds Adrian pouring his wine into the ocean the next day and explains how he pieced the case together. As they both casually walk back to Columbo’s car, Columbo asks if he will get a confession. Carsini responds: “Oh, yes, I’ll confess. There’s no remorse attached to it. It’s a great weight off my mind, as a matter of fact...Well, you see, Karen guessed the truth. She’s turning the thumbscrews on me. She’s quite a little iron maiden, that lady. I guess freedom is purely relative.” As usual, Columbo traps his suspects into confessing through attention to detail and some clever maneuvering. Carsini also implies that being charged with murder will be more liberating for him than being trapped into marriage by the conniving woman who has worked with him for twelve years.

Columbo also has a certain level of comfort with murderers that Kojak and McGarrett do not possess. When given the opportunity, Kojak and McGarrett lecture their criminals

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259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
with righteous indignation and order someone else to charge the criminals. Columbo operates very differently. He acts comfortably around the individuals he knows are murderers, and even develops real relationships with them as people. Before taking Adrian to the police station, Columbo stops at his vineyard, allowing him one last time to look at the place. While in the car, Columbo brings out a nice dessert wine and pours each of them a glass. Then, as Columbo starts to drive away, he hands Carsini the entire bottle. For Columbo, solving the puzzle is far more important than actually arresting a murderer.

Ultimately, Columbo arrests the murderer at the conclusion of every episode, but Columbo also understands his murderers as complex people. This empathy feminizes him to a certain extent. In another episode, “Swan Song,” Johnny Cash guest stars as Tommy Brown, a gospel singer who kills his wife (also over a money dispute).\(^\text{262}\) Columbo finally tracks him down in the middle of the wilderness. While sitting in Columbo’s car, the singer confesses to his crime and asks, “aren’t you afraid being up here alone with a killer?”\(^\text{263}\) In response, Columbo turns on the radio, which is playing Tommy Brown’s hit song, and says, “Any man that can sing like that can’t be all bad.”\(^\text{264}\) Columbo finds the human qualities of the murderers he arrests. In contrast to Kojak and McGarrett, who never care about a criminal’s emotions, Columbo seems less masculine. However, the care he shows for his suspects enables him to maintain his control over them. The murderers are more willing to confess to Columbo because he seems to care. This softer masculinity ultimately works to reinforce his power.

In “A Stitch in Crime,” Columbo treats his criminal differently because he has the opportunity to save someone from the murderer.\(^\text{265}\) The episode aired in 1973 during \textit{Columbo}’s second season. The episode opens with an ambulance rushing to a hospital with a


\(^{263}\) Ibid.

\(^{264}\) Ibid.

patient fighting off his oxygen mask. Once at the hospital, the audience learns the patient is in fact Dr. Edmund Hidemann, a surgeon and researcher who works for the hospital. After quizzing the doctor in the emergency department on his diagnosis, Dr. Hidemann goes to his lab where he and a Dr. Barry Mayfield (Leonard Nimoy) have been developing a drug to counteract transplant rejections. Dr. Mayfield is eager to announce their research and earn the credit before other researchers develop the same drugs. However, Dr. Hidemann, the main researcher, says they need to run more tests. Nurse Sharon Martin interrupts their conversation to pull Dr. Hidemann into a patient room, and Dr. Mayfield says he will perform a valve replacement operation on him that evening.

Already suspicious of Dr. Mayfield, Sharon watches him very closely while assisting him in surgery. After the surgery, Dr. Mayfield questions her, but she just says she feels “foolish.”266 However, without realizing the doctor is still watching her, she notices the sutures he used in the operation, feels them, and places them in her pocket. Later, Dr. Mayfield confronts her. Sharon tells him that she did not bring that suture into the operation room and accuses him of doing something to Dr. Hidemann that would kill him later. Through Columbo’s investigation, the audience learns that Sharon is completely correct. Dr. Mayfield used dissolving sutures, which would have killed Dr. Hidemann in a few days. The doctor sits down on Sharon’s desk and belittles her suspicions, saying:

Sharon, I know you’re not very fond of me, but I never realized you were so obsessive. If I were you, I’d have that suture checked out. If you’re so sure that I’ve done something that’s going to make lovable old Hidemann suddenly drop dead in a few days, I’m sure the police would love to know about it. I suggest you take your suspicions to them, but before you lose yourself in your hysteria, would you please mark and file these bottles and put them in the cooler tray?267

266 Ibid.
267 Ibid.
He leaves the room and Sharon immediately calls to make an appointment with what the audience later learns is a chemist at the laboratory that makes the sutures. Dr. Mayfield listens to her conversation on another telephone. He responds by murdering her in the parking structure later that evening.

The following morning, Columbo appears at the crime scene more disheveled than normal. His hair is messier than an average day, his tie is crooked, and he yawns continuously. Explaining that he stayed up all night because his wife did not feel well, Columbo interferes with the initial investigation of the crime scene. Another police officer has to stop Columbo from peeling his hard-boiled egg in the middle of the scene to keep it clear. Columbo often appears on the crime scene in different states of disorganization. Kojak and McGarrett can stay up all night to solve a crime, but the exhaustion never truly affects them, and they certainly are never ill. In “Old Fashioned Murder,” Columbo has a cold that does not affect his ability to catch the murderer but does change his actions. When he first arrives at the crime scene, he parks by crashing into the police car in front of him. Unfazed, he mumbles an apology and continues walking into the building. In “Now You See Him,” Columbo appears on the crime scene with a new, darker, and better fitting raincoat. When another police officer mentions that he looks different, Columbo responds that he got a new haircut, even though his hair looks just as unkempt as usual. Later, Columbo complains, “I’ve got to take off this coat. I can’t think in this coat.” His exhaustion, illness, and discomfort provide some comedic relief to the show, but also add to Columbo’s persona. He appears more human and therefore less intimidating to murderers trying to evade his suspicions.

268 Feibleman and Fischer, Columbo, “Old Fashioned Murder.”
269 Ibid.
271 Ibid.
Columbo pieces together the case in “A Stitch in Crime” relatively quickly despite the doctor’s attempts to frame Sharon’s ex-boyfriend. Through his investigation, Columbo realizes that Dr. Hidemann is in danger, but struggles to find the evidence to arrest Dr. Mayfield. After talking to the doctor, he follows him into his office and tells him exactly how he planned to kill Dr. Hidemann. In response, Dr. Mayfield begins to laugh, saying, “You don’t really believe all those foolish things you said, do you?” Columbo then uncharacteristically loses his temper. Slamming a clock down on the doctor’s desk, Columbo yells at him, “I believe you killed Sharon Martin and I believe you are trying to kill Dr. Hidemann.” The doctor responds that Columbo has everything but proof. Leaning over the desk, Columbo threatens Dr. Mayfield. He tells Dr. Mayfield he better take care of Dr. Hidemann because if he dies, they will do an autopsy.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hidemann’s condition is worsening. Dr. Mayfield rushes him into surgery and replaces the dissolving sutures with the proper permanent sutures. Just as he finishes the operation, Columbo bursts into the room with a warrant to search the entire room. Dr. Mayfield shoves Columbo out of the way and yells at the police. Ultimately, he allows the police to search the room, but they fail to find anything incriminating. Back in the doctor’s office, Columbo shakes Dr. Mayfield’s hand, takes off his surgical gown, and puts it on the couch. Columbo tells the doctor he won and leaves the room. Columbo gives the doctor just enough time to breathe a sigh of relief before he storms back into the room. Excited to share his epiphany, Columbo tells the doctor, “You know in a way, I have to congratulate you. Up until now, you really had me going.” As Columbo walks over to the couch and sits down, placing himself on a lower plane than the doctor, he continues, “You never lose yourself. That’s why it struck me funny when you blew up in the operating room when you grabbed me and pushed me. I mean, you know there was only one thing we didn’t

272 Ibid.
273 Ibid.
274 Ibid.
search. You know what it was?²⁷⁵ He pulls the missing sutures out of his surgical gown and answers his own question: “It was me.”²⁷⁶ With the evidence Columbo needs in hand, the episode ends.

Not filling the typical tough cop persona, Columbo portrays a type of masculinity completely different than Kojak or McGarrett. He is unorganized, less physically assuming, and very much attached to his wife. While Kojak and McGarrett become righteously indignant in the company of criminals, Columbo allows them a greater level of humanity, such as when Columbo allows Adrian one last bottle of wine before taking him to prison. Meanwhile, women are allowed more power and characterization in the show, but are often trivial, like Ms. Stewart, or conniving, like the former movie star or Adrian’s secretary. Ultimately, Columbo still perpetuates a masculinity based upon control. Most of Columbo’s masculinity derives from his cunning and ability to manipulate a situation. His power comes from his ability to make others believe they are in control when in reality Columbo manipulates every situation so he can control others without appearing to do so. Columbo forces General Hollister, Adrian Carsisi, and Dr. Mayfield to confess despite their confidence throughout their respective episodes. That level of control is in many ways more powerful than that of Kojak and McGarrett. When the other two has to resort to strength and violence, Columbo uses his intelligence. This creates masculinity just as controlled and superior to femininity, but in a different way.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.
²⁷⁶ Ibid.
**CHAPTER 5**

**CONCLUSION**

*Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, and Columbo* developed in response to the times. The dominance of crime shows during prime time paralleled the news cycle. As white flight left cities to crumble, many Americans feared rising crime rates. They saw cities in need of control and protection. As a result, crime shows became relevant to audiences, which allowed the series more power to influence their audiences. *Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, and Columbo* constructed three very different forms of masculinity. Kojak’s strong and tough demeanor commanded the respect of everyone around him. His sexual prowess, willingness to use force, and ability to remain in control almost always gave him a hyper-masculine image. Kojak often went on long diatribes, but they were directed at problems with the judicial system. McGarrett maintained an image similar to Kojak, but he was ever so slightly softer. He had a pretty face and perfect hair, but was just as tough on crime. Equally as controlling, he could attract women as well as Kojak, killed without flinching, and defended the entire state of Hawaii from Communism and other high-profile crimes. Columbo established a completely different type of masculinity. Short, frumpy, and married, Columbo worked alone and used his unassuming presence to trick criminals into confession. While he seemed completely different from the other two, he maintained control over his suspects throughout every episode. These three characters represented different forms of masculinity, but they ultimately all sent the same gendered message to their audiences. All three are all rational, controlled, and morally motivated men.

Each show created a normative masculinity in contrast to femininity. The idealized masculine man is in absolute control. Whether he controlled through authoritative strength like Kojak and McGarrett or bumbling yet cunning like Columbo, they maintain power.
These men upheld the law with a justified level of calm. Their control is most obvious in contrast to the women in the shows. Women are represented as either hysterical sex objects or simply conniving. Women in *Kojak* are usually sexual objects for Kojak’s enjoyment or vulnerable and in need of his protection. *Hawaii Five-O* eventually gave a woman a spot on the elite squad, but made sure the story arc revolved around the woman conquering her emotional response, reinforcing the idea that most women are irrational. Women are mostly sexualized or trivialized, but a select few receive some character development. *Columbo* creates the best, nuanced female characters. However, they usually have some sort of emotionally damaged past or need Columbo’s council in some way. Columbo’s wife challenges this. She is the most powerful female, but never actually appears on screen. Ultimately, the women in each show do not receive the same amount of respect as men. They cause problems while the men solve them. Not only do these shows represent men as more powerful, but they also implicitly argue that women are undeserving of equal power.

While women are poorly characterized in contrast to men, not all men are worthy of respect. The criminals represent an undesirable masculinity. They often have similar qualities to the leading men (Kojak and McGarrett, in particular). Criminals are strong and violent. However, whereas the police officers use these qualities for the greater good, criminals are selfishly motivated. They lack the ability to control their emotions and therefore do not represent the same idealized masculinity the leading men represent. To an extent, the criminals are feminized. Just like the women, they cannot be trusted because they lack the rational composure and moral motivation of the leading men.

While this study focuses on gender constructions in crime television, there are a number of directions that still need development in this field. Intersectionality, how we understand the interconnected nature of social categories, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and class, in particular, needs addressing. Considering the increased incarceration rates of the 1970s disproportionately affected men of color and men from the working-class, an understanding of how these shows represented race, ethnicity, and class are necessary.

Some scholars have touched on race in crime television, but the topic needs more elaboration. The overwhelming majority of characters in these shows, good or bad, are white. If people of color did appear in the shows, with the exception of *Hawaii Five-O*, they were criminal. Even in *Hawaii Five-O*, the non-white members of Five-O received far less power.
Chin Ho and Kono Kalakaua worked together and mostly separate from the white members of the team. They simply took orders and rarely provided meaningful insight into the investigation. Overall, the shows represented whiteness as part of the masculine ideal.

While each leading man was white, they all had an ethnic identity. Roger Sabin briefly mentions that “Savalas was of Greek ancestry, and this was convenient device for positioning him as a kind of mediator between the white and black communities in the story.”277 This is not limited to Kojak. McGarrett is represented as an Irish American and Columbo is Italian American. This ethnicity could have two effects. First, as Sabin argues, it allows them to bridge racial divides. He claims that they all firmly belong with white America, but their ethnic identities allowed some them the ability to relate to people of color. However, this may be overstated because ultimately these men operate very well within white American culture. Rather, an ethnic identity increases their Americanness, as immigration stories are nearly fundamental to the American identity. Having a clear ethnicity draws upon American mythology of working hard to be successful. These men represent a masculine ideal because they (or their ancestors) successfully integrated into the dominant culture. Superficially, the ethnic identity appears to help the police officers to relate to non-white criminals, but in reality it just reinforces that whiteness is part of the masculine ideal.

Class also deserves further elaboration. In regard to class, there seems to be no agreed upon message. The criminals in Kojak are most often from the working-class. McGarrett’s criminals vary from working to middle-class, but are rarely wealthy. Columbo, in contrast, attacks the class system. The murderers he investigates are overwhelmingly wealthy and murder for money. All three of the leading men occupy varying levels of the middle-class. While not completely clear, there seems to be a glorification of the middle-class that is worth exploring further.

Finally, expanding this study beyond Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, and Columbo would provide a more thorough picture of the messages crime shows sent in the 1970s and beyond.

277 Sabin, “Kojak,” 84.
Crime television has experienced three periods of relevance. Typified by *Dragnet* (1951-1959), the genre first developed in the 1950s. After a brief reprieve in the 1960s, crime television dominated the 1970s. In the post 9/11 era, it regained significance and remains important today. The first two eras require further investigation, but they overwhelmingly portray men. In the modern iteration of crime television, women are allocated far more screen time.

Gender constructions in this current wave of crime TV do not seem as rigid. Some shows certainly give women more agency. The modern incarnation of *Hawaii Five-O* (2010-) cast a female, Grace Park, to play the previously male role of Kono Kalakaua. While significant, she still remains in a secondary position. Dr. Temperance Brennan in *Bones* and Lieutenant Olivia Benson in *Law & Order: SVU* are just two examples of leading women in crime television today. However, even they have traumatic back-stories that hardened them, and emotional damage seems to be the prerequisite for female crime fighters. Benson had an abusive, alcoholic mother who was raped when she conceived her. Brennan’s parents disappeared when she was fifteen years old, forcing her into foster care. A continuing theme portrays women who fight crime as emotionally damaged in some way. Therefore, there is something wrong with women who chose to go in law enforcement. Even these shows that supposedly give women more authority reflect a belief that normative femininity does not deserve power. They have to endure something to become ‘masculine’ enough for the position. It seems as if the genre maintains masculinity as an ideal, but further research could explore if the increase in representation disrupts a gender hierarchy at all.

Feminists made some significant political, economic, and social progress in the 1970s. Legally, they achieved near gender equality, but it takes a change in social attitudes for actions to mirror the law. Feminists experienced extreme backlash in the 1980s with the rise of the New Right. Anti-feminism sent American politics on a path that continues to limit women today. Feminists are still fighting for basic rights that most thought would be won during the second-wave. Considering the rates at which Americans consumed these shows in the 1970s, 1980s “backlash” is not surprising. Crime television represented masculinity as rational and in control. In the context of the 1970s, when Americans truly feared an increase in crime rate, these shows were convincing. If viewers believed American cities needed protection, then watching shows that told them only a man with great power could keep them
safe would persuade viewers to agree with the shows’ gendered messages. Watching a show that represents such a rigid gender hierarchy suggests audiences were willing to accept the sexism. Audiences continually turned on TV shows that represented masculinity as superior to femininity and trivialized feminist demands. Throughout the entire decade, Americans received messages that glorified men as powerful protectors of the law in contrast to women that caused trouble. Certainly not every viewer believed the messages crime television sold, but the fact that the shows aired weekly for years matters. The 1980s anti-feminism simply articulated what Americans had already consumed throughout the 1970s.
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