

LOU GRANT: A JOURNALIST'S JOURNALIST
An Analysis of the Character Who Spanned Two Successful Television Series and
Became a Hero to a Generation of Real-Life Journalists and Would-Be Journalists

By Debra Marisa Greene

Lou Grant is the type of person who makes journalists proud. He gives the news media – long criticized for their sensationalism and lack of compassion – a good name. Grant portrays a hard-working journalist who is passionate about his field and lives every waking moment for it. Grant is a hero in journalism, especially to the reporters, copy editors, producers, writers and anchors who work with him. He has integrity and maintains a high sense of journalistic ethics, but he is by no means perfect. He possesses some stereotypical flaws seen in both real-life journalists and actors who portray journalists. On the exterior, Grant is a moody, gruff boss capable of putting insurmountable pressure on his staff. But that façade is easily swept away, revealing a man of great kindness and love. The character Lou Grant is best described by Ed Asner, the actor who played him for 13 years:

I think he portrays a certain amount of reality of every existing city editor in a number two paper in a metropolitan site. I think he also presents the ideal that so many people have had in entering into journalism, hoping to fall under the sway of that type of individual. The human being, a gruff, barking type who allows you to retain your machoness and, at the same time, enough holes in him, ala Swiss cheese, that you can see that his bark doesn't mean a damn thing. So it's the type of boss we all love to work for...And one who certainly knows his business from long association in it, one who has tastes, standards and has not yet been ground down.¹

Grant's image has been broadcast to millions of American living rooms since September 19, 1970, when *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* premiered. Lou Grant was news director for WJM-News in Minneapolis in the half-hour sitcom until 1978 when the series ended, and he left Minnesota for a position as city editor of the *Los Angeles Tribune* in the one-hour drama *Lou*

Grant. Since Asner played Lou Grant on both programs, the character maintained continuity. He achieved more depth in the transfer from 30-minute sitcom to one-hour drama. The transformation from TV news director to city editor provided a greater opportunity to view Grant as a journalist. In *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Grant's persona was more stylized and humorous. Since *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* was a comedy, Grant's hard-nosed attitude and sarcasm were exaggerated. In *Lou Grant*, the character possessed stronger and more realistic personality traits. In this television show, Grant was more serious-minded and not over the top.

Grant is the quintessential journalist whom young idealistic journalists strive to be like. Even though he is only a fictional character, Grant vividly depicts a real-life journalist in his broadcast and print media roles. Rather than merely showing the bad and the ugly of journalism, Grant generally represents the profession in a positive light.

HARD-NOSED JOURNALIST

Grant can be a rough character. Much like journalists portrayed in films from the 1930s to the 1950s, he can be harsh, abrasive and even unkind. As portrayed in early movies, editors faced enormous pressures in putting out a newspaper "that kills the competition using lazy, often drunken reporters, and they have to answer to amoral circulation-hungry publishers who only want to see results, not excuses."² One such film journalist, Peter Warne, played by Clark Gable in the motion picture *It Happened One Night* (1934) is considered "a prototype of the male newspaper reporter in motion pictures:"³

There is absolutely no reason anyone should like Warne. He is a fast-talking cynic with no regard for the truth, a brash opportunist who will stop at nothing to get what he wants, an amoral, alcoholic rogue who will lie, cheat, do anything to get a scoop for his newspaper, a big-city, wisecracking shyster who talks fast, thinks fast, works fast, often lives by his wits, and won't take any crap from anyone.⁴

Grant is a boss in both television shows. As the news director in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Grant oversees Mary Richards (the producer played by Mary Tyler Moore), Murray Slaughter (the writer played by Gavin MacLeod) and Ted Baxter (the anchorman played by Ted Knight). As the city editor in *Lou Grant*, he manages the *Tribune* city room and supervises the reporting staff including Joe Rossi (played by Robert Walden) and Billie Newman (played by Linda Kelsey), and his assistant Art Donovan (played by Jack Bannon). But, like editors depicted in motion pictures, Grant must please his supervisors. At WJM, he answers to the program director and station manager. At the *Tribune*, Grant must satisfy the demands of the managing editor, Charlie Hume (played by Mason Adams), and publisher, Mrs. Margaret Jones Pynchon (played by Nancy Marchand). Like real journalists in similar positions, Grant strikes a balance between those below him and those above him.

Lou Grant's first appearance on television reveals his tough-minded approach to the business. In a classic scene, Mary Richards comes to the WJM newsroom applying for a job. She is quite hopeful when Grant tells her, "You know what? You've got spunk." Richards responds with a smile, "Well, yes." Then, Grant says in a harsh tone, "I HATE spunk. Tell you what. I will try you out for a couple weeks, see if it works out. If I don't like you, I'll fire you. If you don't like me, I'll fire you."⁵ Grant's first encounter with Richards provides viewers with a glimpse of what to expect from this character for 13 years to come.

Grant makes it clear to his staff that he's the boss. In "I Gave at the Office," Grant is unhappy after Richards hires Murray Slaughter's daughter, Bonnie. Grant becomes a nervous wreck. Richards insists that he must compromise and put some effort in the working relationship with Bonnie. But Grant refuses. "I don't want to make a minimal effort. I don't have to make a minimal effort. I'm a boss. I don't even like saying 'minimal,'" he complains.⁶ In another

episode, “The Outsider,” Grant hires a consultant to improve the ratings. He explains to his staff that he is the boss and does not have to follow all the demands from the consultant. “There aren’t going to be any orders around here. He’s only here to make suggestions and he’s going to make them to everybody. He’s going to make them to Murray, he’s going to make them to you and he’s even going to make them to me. The only difference is I don’t have to take them.”⁷

A tough boss who can be harsh to his staff, Grant gets easily perturbed and can often be grouchy and temperamental. His short temper is revealed when he lashes out at conceited anchorman, Ted Baxter. In a campaign to win a Teddy Award, Baxter decides to pray on-air. Grant explodes, “I’m too angry to reason.” He tells Richards, “You better stay. You reason with him. When I get like this, all I can do is kill.” When Baxter walks into the office, Grant growls at him in rage. Grant repeatedly yells, “Ted, I’m going to kill you.”⁸

In another episode, Baxter promises to pay Slaughter for a flattering article about him that *Reader’s Digest* publishes. But, later, Baxter refuses to share credit or money with Slaughter. Grant snaps at Slaughter, “We both know what’s going on here, and we think it stinks.” Richards puts it more kindly: “Murray, what Mr. Grant means is we both know what’s going on here, and we think it stinks.”⁹

Grant’s blunt, negative attitude personifies the hard-nosed journalist. When Grant speaks to journalism students at night school, he gives a candid, terse lecture. He sums up broadcast news writing in a one sentence: “Good news writing is getting the facts, getting them fast and presenting them well.” An excited student asks Grant, “How good are job opportunities in news writing today?” Grant squashes the naïve young man’s hopes when he brusquely responds, “Lousy. There aren’t enough jobs to go around.”¹⁰

As the boss, Grant is “the symbol of male authority” to such an extent that Richards always addresses him formally as “Mr. Grant” while men in the newsroom call him “Lou.”¹¹ In one episode, when Grant engages in a personal conversation with Richards and discusses his marital problems, he asks her to call him by his first name. He says, “It won’t work if you’re calling me Mr. Grant. Call me Lou.” But, Mary struggles saying “Lou.” So, he finally says, “Call me Mr. Grant.”¹²

Grant starts off as sexist. When he interviews Richards for the job at WJM, he says, “I figured I would hire a man for it.”¹³ In another episode, Richards confronts Grant about her salary: “I would like to know why the last associate producer before me made \$50 a week more than I do.” Grant answers, “Because he was a man.”¹⁴ Apparently, he was paid more even though Richards was doing a “better” job than he did. Grant later relents and gives her the raise she deserves.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Grant displays a macho attitude throughout the series. His rough edges often mask his softer side. He is “one of the boys.”¹⁶ His favorite pastimes include “football, horse racing, drinking roughhousing, male bonding in its traditional aspects.”¹⁷

Grant’s display of sexism corresponds to many 1930s’ and 1940s’ motion pictures portraying male journalists who put down female journalists or “sob sisters,”¹⁸ as they have been called. The 1935 movie *Front Page Woman* reveals this battle of the sexes. Bette Davis and George Brent are reporters at rival papers. Brent, a chauvinist male, vows to marry Davis if she quits “trying” to be a reporter. They even arrange a bet where Davis promises to marry him if he first discovers the murderer.

At times, Grant seems to completely lack emotion. During *The Mary Tyler Moore: The 20th Anniversary Show*, Moore says with tears in her eyes, “These are the most wonderful friends

a person could ever...” Asner interrupts her with a typical Lou Grant response, “Mary, if you are going to get all dewey-eyed and nostalgic about this reunion thing, I’m out of here.”¹⁹

It was difficult for Grant to show a softer side. In a heated discussion when Mary says, “Because I love you” to Grant, he responds uneasily, “Look, we can’t have a fight if you say things like that.” He finally reluctantly gives in: “OK, OK, I lose, you win.”²⁰

A matter-of-fact kind of guy, Grant is not the touchy-feely type. When Grant hires a female newscaster, Enid, he finds himself in an awkward position. Grant welcomes her to the newsroom, and she responds by giving him a hug. Again, Grant feels uneasy about showing emotion. “Enid, one of the first things you want to learn about this job is no hugging... We’re not a hugging newsroom. Some staffs are, but we don’t.”²¹

In *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Grant’s persona is extreme and, at times, an exaggeration of the Grant portrayed in the *Lou Grant* drama, where he maintains a diminished edginess. Grant amplifies his grouchiness in the sitcom, serving up an over-the-top attitude that gives the live audience reason to laugh.

In *Lou Grant*, Grant is hard on his staff, always pushing them to do their best. He can be quite blunt with them. He reprimands them when they do not meet his high expectations. When Joe Rossi uses quotes from a source who said their conversation was off the record, Grant uses the same terminology he used when he was angry at Ted Baxter: “I am going to kill you, Rossi...It’s not irresponsible. It’s carefully thought out. I am going to kill you. Not physically, you understand, as much as I would enjoy it. No, I am going to kill you intellectually. I am going to break your spirit.”²²

In the drama, Grant can be curt to people outside his staff as well. When colleague Duncan Aldridge dies, his widow, Gloria, begins to rely on Grant as a replacement for her husband. Grant finally gets so fed up that he tells her he has to be brusque:

Gloria, years ago on my small town paper, my editor called me over and said, “Hey, what does this mean?” Because I had written a sentence in a story. I had a prisoner blurt out a confession. And my editor told me, people don’t blurt, they say. And he made me change it. And from that time on, I never never blurted again until now when the top of my head is coming off. And I can’t say. I have to blurt.²³

She replies, “Go ahead, blurt.” So, he shouts to her abruptly, “Get off my back.” Grant softens a bit: “I didn’t mean that quite the way it sounded.” Gloria finally agrees to stop overly relying on Grant. “I have got to stop depending on you to make all of my decisions,” she says.²⁴

In both shows, a journalist from another publication writes a story about Grant’s workplace that includes a description of Grant. While each article portrays him negatively, they provide some truths about Grant from another perspective. For example, in an episode of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, “What is Mary Richards Really Like?” news columnist Mark Williams, who has a crush on Richards, publishes a positive piece about her while portraying her co-workers in a negative light. In her apartment, Richards reads the column aloud to her friend, Rhoda Morgenstern:

Bringing a bright smile and infectious vivacity to her otherwise humdrum newsroom duties at WJM is Mary Richards, the best-looking thing to ever hit Minneapolis news. Lou Grant, who Mary still calls Mr. Grant after two years, is a tough boss but still hasn’t broken her indomitable spirit. The hard-drinking Grant...²⁵

In *Lou Grant*’s episode, “Exposé,” a tabloid journalist, Barbara Benedict, interviews the staff for a piece about the *Tribune* city room. When *Tribune* staffers read the article, they find out it is really an exposé that leaves readers with a negative impression. Grant speaks with his staff about the troubling piece. “You’re trying to tell me that somebody actually used these

words to describe me?” Grant rants. “A classic example of a dying breed. He’s almost a cliché. A hard-nosed, bull-headed, bad tempered tyrant of the city room.”²⁶

Both articles serve up several nuggets of truth. Grant is a “tough boss”²⁷ and a “hard-nosed”²⁸ journalist. At times, he can be “bull-headed” and “bad tempered.” But, Grant is no “tyrant.”²⁹ In *Mary Tyler Moore*, Grant warns Richards about the reporter: “A man like Mark Williams delights in taking perfectly innocent little things you say and twisting.”³⁰ In *Lou Grant*, Grant knows the article is an exaggeration of his “hard-nosed” qualities. He also knows that it is poor journalism. Grant runs into Mike Norvette, Gloria’s tabloid colleague, and complains, “I don’t like your style of journalism. It makes it harder on the rest of us.”³¹

COMPASSIONATE MAN

“On the surface, the mean bastard – but a millimeter below the skin, a caring man.”³² That’s how Asner describes Lou Grant. Television historians Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh offer a similar delineation: “An irascible, cantankerous, blustery man whose bark was much worse than his bite. Underneath that harsh exterior beat the heart of a pussycat.”³³

Robert S. Alley and Irby B. Brown put it this way in *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*:

Lou is a gruff bear, often impatient, loud, a very physical person whether he is being aggressive or not, but he is also a father confessor, capable of great patience and understanding, even gentleness. He is at times blunt and straightforward, but at times tentative, even delicate, capable of choosing his words with compassionate understanding.³⁴

While the typical journalist in the movies is portrayed as a hard-nosed character with little compassion, Grant truly cares about people, his staff and his duties. Fictional journalists are often described as “rowdy and vulgar...the lusty, hoodlumesque, half-drunken caballero.”³⁵

Grant's brusque attitude with his wife, Edie, was established in the first episode of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Mary answers the newsroom telephone. Edie wants to speak with Grant. Richards says to Grant, "Mr. Grant, it's Mrs. Grant. She's calling from the airport." Grant responds, "Oh yeah, she's going to her sister's for a month. Tell her I will speak to her when she gets back."³⁶ But this is just his façade. Grant's true colors – a softer side – are shown when he and his wife, Edie, are having marital problems and separate. Grant truly loves Edie and does not want to lose her. As Edie walks out of their house leaving him, Grant demonstrates his sensitivity and tenderness. Grant yells to her from the front door, "And listen Edie, if you plan on come marching back to me, I'm warning you...I'll take you right back."³⁷

When Baxter makes inappropriate remarks during the newscast, Grant loses his temper. "Can you believe it? Endorsing one candidate and libeling the other on the air?" Grant angrily says to Richards and Slaughter. Grant goes to the studio and throws Baxter through the office doors.³⁸ Baxter limps into Grant's office disheveled and says, "Don't touch me. I don't think I can come into work tomorrow. I can't move my head." When Grant sees Baxter injured, he softens. "Forget the doctor," he says to Baxter. "You're going to the hospital. Here, lean on me, and I will help you down to my car." When Baxter responds that he cannot make it, Grant says, "I'll carry you down to my car." While Baxter is hospitalized for several days, Grant visits him, showing his concern.³⁹

The episode "Sue Ann Gets the Ax" also depicts Grant's compassionate side. Grant gives Richards additional responsibility – to hire employees for WJM News. Sue Ann Nivens (played by Betty White and known as the "Happy Homemaker"), begs Richards for a job in the newsroom after her homemaking show is cancelled. But, Richards says she will not hire Nivens because she lacks the qualifications. So, Nivens is forced to work odd and, at times, humiliating

jobs at the station.⁴⁰ Grant feels sorry for Nivens and encourages Richards to hire her. Grant tells Richards that she, too, did not have credentials for the job when he hired her seven years ago: “You had zilch [qualifications]. Did I ever tell you the reason I hired you? A little run. A tiny little run in your stocking on your knee. You kept trying to cover it up. And I thought to myself, ‘What kind of a girl is this who is so afraid of a thing like that?’ Do you think that was a bad reason to hire you?” Grant then persuades Richards that sometimes it is important to be kind, even if it is irresponsible. “It was damn sweet [to hire Richards even though she lacked qualifications]. That’s what I have been trying to tell you. There are plenty times in life when you do the competent, responsible thing. But, every once in a while, we need to be damn sweet. If we’re lucky, we’ll never have to regret it.”⁴¹

In *Lou Grant*, Grant is a journalist who not only cares about his newspaper, but also shows concern for his staff. When a colleague dies and his son, Rodger, runs away from home in distress, Grant takes the initiative to help out the family. He goes to the train station to stop Rodger from running away. Grant talks to him with patience and understanding:

But your mother might say some things to you, which she wishes she hadn’t because she is feeling pretty lousy. Now is when she needs you, and you’re running out on her because you are feeling pretty rotten yourself, and you don’t know how to handle it...Rodger, you may be an only child. But, now she is an only parent. Maybe she hasn’t had time to get used to that idea.⁴²

After their heartwarming discussion, Rodger decides to go back home.⁴³

Grant also shows his caring side by taking time out of his busy schedule to help Chris, a young copy editor aspiring to be a reporter. Grant gives Chris material to practice writing news stories and then critiques his work. He teaches Chris that “the lead should...grab the readers’ attention. Writing a lead should be more than reciting all the facts. It should involve the reader, make him want more.” Grant encourages Chris to keep practicing by giving him more stories to

write. He tells Chris, “The only way to learn is to keep trying.”⁴⁴ This example depicts Grant as a person who sincerely cares about inspiring young people in their pursuit of a journalism career.

In another instance, Grant illustrates his compassion to a little girl, Lisa Evans, who visits the newsroom with her aunt. Billie Newman asks Grant, “Can you baby sit?” Grant responds in his typical matter-of-fact way: “I’ve got a lot of work to do, Billie. You know I didn’t even baby sit my own kids that much.”⁴⁵ But then he relents and takes Lisa upon his lap. Grant decides to talk to her about journalism. “See this paragraph here, Lisa? All wrong. It’s wordy, it’s muddy and it’s boring. Here you do it [Lisa crosses it out]. Someday you’re going to make a hell of an editor, kid.”⁴⁶

LOU GRANT: A HEROIC JOURNALIST REVEALED THROUGH EXPERIENCE

On both shows, Grant makes ethical journalistic decisions even if the newscast loses viewers and the newspaper loses readers. A respected journalist, Grant has integrity, always “applying those old standards. And he had standards,” reports Asner.⁴⁷ This, combined with his extensive journalistic experience, inspires younger journalists to strive to be the best. His goal is to serve the public interest by providing people with pertinent information. Accordingly, Grant is a hero to the many journalists he interacts with – “a practitioner of journalistic integrity, and perhaps we can say that he wanted his office run according to the highest principles.”⁴⁸

On *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Grant constantly reminisces about “the good ol’ days” as a newspaperman. This establishes him as a competent journalist who has the knowledge and expertise to be a distinguished editor and news director. On one occasion, when Grant worries about getting fired, he tells Mary, “I never should have left that old newspaper. But, it was those mergers that was driving me nuts. I was tired of telling people I worked for the *Times Globe*

Journal Chronicle.”⁴⁹ On *Lou Grant*, Grant talks to Newman about a story she is writing on gang violence. He recalls women journalists in his newspaper days: “I love a good sob story. I remember when we used to have these women reporters who wore the big hats. They’d come back to the office after covering a story. Without taking off their long white gloves, they’d wrap up 5,000 words that would wrench your guts out. They were great, those sob sisters.”⁵⁰

At other times, Grant recalls when he was a young journalist who lacked experience:

I remember in the early ‘40s back there when I was a kid working on the city desk in the *Detroit Free Press*. It was Sunday 4 o’ clock in the morning, somebody phoned in a story, and I had no way to check it out. It was either print the biggest story of the century and beat every paper in the city by hours or kill it. I was a gutsy kid so I decided to print it. Do you want to know what that story was? I will tell you what that story was. The Japanese had just bombed...San Diego. So I was wrong. It takes guts to be wrong, doesn’t it?⁵¹

Grant has come a long way from those days.

As news director of WJM-TV, Grant is a respected journalist in a news station that has the lowest ratings in Minneapolis. Even though *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* pokes fun at television news, Grant still stands as a professional journalist who sincerely cares about his work.

As Asner puts it:

To me, Lou was primarily a typical American Midwestern good old boy. He believed what he read, respected his elders to dispense good advice, and I suppose through attrition of war and profession became slowly more and more aware of the subtleties of life, or the subtleties of print. He became wise, slowly but surely, and at the same time he always operated with what I think is a great common core of honor, an honorable center, beginning with a straight shoot. I think life had given him the opportunity to make the right choices and the right selections about what was important and what wasn’t, what was news and what wasn’t, who were good people and who were not. I think he was a creature of, even captive of, his profession.⁵²

Grant’s journalistic integrity is demonstrated throughout the series, such as the time he persuades Richards not to reveal her anonymous source even if it means going to jail.⁵³ His ethics are also apparent when the station manager, Jack Stoneham, tells Grant that he has to

make the newscast more entertaining. Grant is appalled at the idea of making the news amusing. Grant says, “That’s rotten.” He sticks to what he believes is journalism. Grant tells Stoneham that he refuses to “hire back that dippy weather girl with her colored crayons. Remember her? Mr. Sun is not smiling today.” Grant believes that there is a line between entertainment and news: “We’re talking about news here. News.”⁵⁴ Grant stands for what he believes is right. He is an honorable old-school journalist who will not turn the news into an informal format just to increase ratings. Grant says, “Jack, I’m not going to make it into something fake.”⁵⁵

As a heroic journalist, Grant offers wise advice to his staff. In the episode “Hi There, Sports Fans,” Grant gives Richards the responsibility of firing the old sportscaster and hiring another. Grant offers Richards some advice: “Mary, I’d like to give you a little course on the basics of good broadcasting...Rule number one, you never fire your old sportscaster until you’ve hired your new sportscaster because that leaves a hole in your organization.”⁵⁶ Grant tries to cheer up Richards after she feels badly about firing the broadcaster. “Alright, remember when everyone thought Ed the sportscaster had died? Look at this postcard. Read what it says.” Richards reads the card aloud: “Sorry to hear about Ed. Having a wonderful time. Best Regards, Charlie Kellerman.” Grant then gives Richards a fatherly talk to uplift her spirits: “That’s what a man’s life comes down to, Mary. Sorry to hear about Ed on the back of a picture postcard of Disneyland. [Mary cries] Mary, Mary, Mary. Cheer up, cheer up because in an infinite universe on a planet the size of the pit, we are mere specks of dust waiting to be blown away.”⁵⁷

In another instance, the staff makes important journalistic decisions that influence what airs on television. Grant and Richard’s aunt, Flo Meredith (played by Eileen Heckart), decide to produce a documentary about a family whose parents were each widowed and are now married with 20 children. But, when the parents decide to get divorced, Grant and Meredith disagree on

how the project should be approached. Meredith says, “I’m sorry for what happened and all that. But, the divorce just makes it a better story, how these people cope with a break-up of a marriage.” However, Grant does not believe in dramatizing the story. He responds, “That’s disgusting. That’s just cheap exploitation of a human tragedy...As a producer, I won’t do it your way.” So, Grant and Richards compete against Meredith and Murray in producing a documentary which will be chosen by the network.⁵⁸

When Grant and Richard’s team wins, Grant demonstrates that he is not a cutthroat competitive journalist. Before Meredith finds out the results, Grant tells her, “Listen, Flo, I’ve been thinking, and I’ve decided it’s stupid for us to compete. We started this thing together, and I think we should end it that way. Here’s what I think we ought to do. Why don’t we put both our names on the final version whoever wins?” But, Meredith declines to accept Grant’s offer: “How gullible do you think I am, sweetheart? You heard something, and I have a pretty good idea what you’ve heard. You lost, and you weren’t man enough to admit it. And now you want to crawl into the winner’s circle. No dice, Grant, no dice.”⁵⁹ Richards says it best in her response to Meredith: “You lost. Mr. Grant won, and he was trying to give you a graceful way out, which you were too conceited to accept. How do you like those words? He just made a lovely, generous offer and you just sneered at him. You make me want to scream.”⁶⁰

In *Lou Grant*, Grant’s integrity is even more apparent because the show is a more realistic portrayal of journalism. Asner sees Grant as “an embodiment of carrying the banner of what traditional journalism had always been considered as and fighting off the forces of modernization, fighting off the commercial pressures that arose.”⁶¹

He is particularly seen as a heroic journalist in the premiere show of *Lou Grant*, “Cophouse.” In this episode, Grant leaves his news director position at WJM and arrives in Los

Angeles at the *Tribune*. There, Grant meets with his old journalist buddy, Charlie Hume. Grant is looking for a job as the city editor. Hume regards Grant as a great journalist. He says, “You are one of the best natural leaders I’ve ever met in my life.”⁶² Once Grant starts his job as city editor, his heroic qualities become evident. Grant is seen as the sensible force between his reporters and his managing editor. Hume talks to Grant about news coverage in the *Tribune* and says, “The bottom line here is that Mrs. Pynchon believes that we have gotten unbalanced with negative police stories.” As an honorable journalist, Grant finds this irresponsible. “We don’t make the news,” he tells Hume.⁶³ Grant believes that the newspaper is obligated to cover important stories and not consciously decide to remove those that are negative.

In “Depression,” Grant learns that police reporter George Driscoll (played by Peter Hobbs) is avoiding a story concerning a major police scandal about officers having sex with underage girls. Driscoll tells Grant that he cannot cover it because “they’re my friends.” Grant tells him, “You are a reporter. You were hired as a reporter. And that is how I carry you in the city room, reporter and writer. So report.” Driscoll insists that if he covers a negative story about the police, he will lose his contacts: “You take them away from me, and I’m finished. I am washed out to sea.” Grant demonstrates his heroism as a journalist when he tells Driscoll that it is the newspaper’s responsibility to report information no matter the repercussions. “Is this an old-fashioned notion of mine that when we find out things, we put them in our newspaper because if we find out things and just keep them to ourselves, we would have all this empty white space in the morning,” he tells George. Grant later adds, “We are going for the story. Whatever it is you are hiding, I need to get it out in the light. I have to do it. There is no other way.”⁶⁴

Grant is faced with a reporter (Driscoll) who wants to avoid the story and another (Joe Rossi) who wants to exploit it. Rossi tries to write the story by attacking the police. Grant finds this biased and tells him, “Maybe he [Driscoll] is protecting his friends. But you don’t even know the story, and you are ready to crucify the cops.”⁶⁵ Rossi writes the piece, and Grant reads it. Grant finds it unfair and is not the type of editor to let things slide. Instead, he tells Rossi, “I am not going to embarrass you by printing this. Redo it.”⁶⁶ It is clear that Grant is a man who prides himself with fair and balanced journalism from the very beginning of his stint at the *Tribune*.

The first episode of *Lou Grant* reveals Grant as an editor willing to stand up to his managing editor and publisher for what he believes is right. At the budget meeting, Grant tells the staff that the police scandal story is front-page news. Hume disagrees: “I don’t feel comfortable with that story. It’s not for page one anyway. Bury it somewhere.” Grant does not give up: “Bury it? Bury it? It’s a hell of a story. It’s balanced, incisive. It raises moral and political issues, which should be raised.”⁶⁷ Since Hume will not concede, Grant decides to see the publisher, Mrs. Pynchon, who says she will not print it because she does not like it: “Fine, let’s talk about journalism. Now I think people are tired of reading negative stories about police. I am tired of it.” Grant won’t budge: “That’s my job: deciding what’s important and what isn’t. And this story is important. I don’t hold a story back because I don’t like it.” Finally, Mrs. Pynchon decides to run the story. With pride, Grant says, “Well, well. We work on a newspaper, a real newspaper.”⁶⁸

Grant always fights for what he believes is his responsibility to the readers. During editorial meetings, Grant presses for the journalistic high ground. In one instance, he argues about the importance of placing a story about a neo-Nazi demonstration on the front page.

“News is news,” he says. “What’s wrong with running that grabber on page one?” Hume disagrees with Grant: “Cool off. I am questioning it if we have to cover it. Personally, I hate it when we have to give these people any publicity at all. That’s the only reason they post stunts like this in the first place. But, at least let’s keep it to the absolute minimum.” However, Grant does not give up: “Charlie, I have a sense of responsibility about what we print too. But this is something we shouldn’t duck. We should give it some attention.”⁶⁹

At another meeting, the staff refuses to publish a story about a country (fictional), Malagua that has detained journalists for negative coverage. Grant tries to persuade his colleagues that it is necessary to print the story: “You are being protective of a country that tortures people, that puts newsmen in jail and that stuff still goes on today.” Grant tells them that it is his obligation as a journalist to inform the public of important matters. “We aren’t telling them what to do. But, as journalists we should be telling our readers what is going on,” he says.⁷⁰

Grant strongly believes in covering important stories even if that means losing advertising. In the episode “Airliner,” the *Tribune* covers a breaking news story about an airplane that cannot lower its landing gear. Grant insists that this story must be covered, and the advertisements must be cut. He exclaims:

The problem we’ve got here is we can’t expand the paper, go up pages to cover this story. The first edition is already running. Setting up the press room for more pages would take an hour, which we haven’t got. The newspaper has to stay the same size. That means with added coverage, something’s got to go.⁷¹

“Advertising, it’s the only expendable we’ve got,” Grant adds.⁷²

Grant provides his staff with encouragement when they feel discouraged. They, in turn, respect him as a heroic journalist who strongly believes in providing important information to the public. Newman writes a story about a Nazi leader, Donald Stryker, who had been born an

Orthodox Jew. After the story gets published, Stryker kills himself. Newman feels responsible for the suicide and speaks to Grant for consolation. “I killed him,” she says. “I put the gun in his hand.” As city editor, Grant acts as a mentor to his reporters. He comforts Newman: “But, knowing that you wrote it anyway, you had the courage to face that. Think about it. Think about it. Maybe it will help you to accept this.” Grant adds:

Billie, Billie. We can't weigh a story and say we shouldn't print it because somebody might get hurt. Sometimes people do get hurt. Sometimes careers are ruined, governments are brought down. But, if the story is there, we have to print it. It's our job. If you are going to be in this business, you are going to have to learn to handle it.⁷³

He also explains to Newman that she made the right decision as a good journalist: “A man is dead. A sad, twisted, tormented man. But, a human being, nevertheless. By writing about him, you help us understand him and maybe ourselves a little better. You have done a great job, and I am proud of you.”⁷⁴

As a good editor, Grant urges his staff to do their best work. He also offers advice yet treats each person with dignity and respect. Editors depicted in films also were “loyal to their reporters...Behind all the yelling and name-calling, when they see their reporters in serious trouble, they're always there to lend a helping hand.”⁷⁵ Grant pushes his staff to produce quality journalism. In one episode, Rossi writes a story about a wilderness survival school without ever attending. So, Grant tells Rossi: “It was a good piece, but you didn't really get involved in it.” Disappointed that Rossi did not delve into the story, Grant says, “You didn't take the course yourself. Your piece didn't have the smell of the forest. You didn't make the reader taste dirt in his morning orange juice.”⁷⁶

In another instance, Grant clashes with veteran sportswriter Sid Locke (played by John Randolph) when he refuses to investigate problems at a local college sports program. Grant

admonishes Locke: “And another thing, if you want to get in touch with the common people, the working stiff, why don’t you try picking up a check some time? In my side, reporters don’t get free meals by dropping the name of a restaurant in a column.”⁷⁷

Grant dedicates his life to his career in journalism. He devotes his time and effort to improving the publication. He instills this philosophy in his staff by pressing them to improve their work. For example, Grant suggests ways that Rossi can write a better story by focusing on a different angle. “You know what might be nice? Comparing the business 40 years ago with today,” he says. “I’m talking about that as the focus of the piece. How the neighborhood has changed, his inventory, advertising practices. Is the standard of living better or worse now? Wouldn’t that be something?” But, Rossi does not want to rewrite the story. Instead, he tells Grant: “I’m on the last graf. Why didn’t you suggest this earlier?” Clearly, Grant is pushing Rossi to become a better journalist: “Make this story special, Rossi. Don’t do this for me, for Pete’s sake. Do it for yourself. Make the story better.”⁷⁸ Aggravated that his staff does not have such devotion to the field, Grant meets with Hume for reassurance. He asks his managing editor, “How can people just walk away from something they know can be better? Everybody finds it damn easy to leave a story unfinished.” A dedicated journalist, Grant accepts nothing less than excellence. He puts it this way: “It’s when people treat this business like it’s just another job. I mean you’ve got to stay until you do it right. I don’t see anything so crazy about that.”⁷⁹

As a journalist with integrity, Grant stands firm against conflicts of interest. He and Hume hire a news reporter, Liz Harrison (played by Gail Strickland), to cover a reelection campaign of city supervisor Corwin. It turns out Harrison and Corwin are having an affair. Grant confronts Harrison: “Did it ever occur to you that maybe that involved you in a conflict of interest?” When she disagrees, Grant explains to her why this situation is journalistically

unethical: “But, here you are with emotional reasons to be loyal to the guy and he’s giving you information...I don’t know exactly where the line is but if you’ve done that, you’ve crossed it.”⁸⁰ Grant believes so fervently in ethics that he talks to Mrs. Pynchon about firing Harrison. Mrs. Pynchon responds with reservations: “You realize firing her will probably ruin her career. She’ll never work on another newspaper again.” Nevertheless, as a heroic and responsible journalist, Grant stands firm against unethical behavior in order to preserve the credibility of the *Tribune*. He retorts, “And if she stays here, no one will ever trust the *Trib*’s reporting again.” He then leaves Mrs. Pynchon and Hume with advice regarding conflict of interest: “An editor of mine once had a saying, which I will clean up a bit: ‘You can get romantically involved with elephants, but don’t cover the circus.’” Grant then fires Harrison to maintain the integrity of the paper.⁸¹

Another ethical issue arises when reporter Sam Huntington (played by Michael Bond) plagiarizes an entire article from a college paper. Again, Grant leads the fight against such behavior by the newspaper staff. Without giving Huntington another chance, Grant resolves to fire him. “I don’t want him setting foot in this room again,” he utters to his assistant city editor, Art Donovan. “There’s no way Sam accidentally lifted that. Every person in that room knows plagiarism is grounds for firing.” Donovan responds, “Shouldn’t we at least ask him why he did it?” But, Grant determines to fire Huntington to protect his newspaper from such indiscretions: “I don’t give a damn why he did it. He did it; he’s out.”⁸²

Grant wins over his reporters, managing editor and publisher with his journalistic integrity. A hero of journalistic ethics, he devotes his life to journalism. And Grant has an excellent sense of what the field is all about. “People in our business have an instinct to take on the big guy. That’s what makes good reporters. If we didn’t, all we’d be printing is the daily

horoscope and movie guide,” he says.⁸³ He also knows what it means to have a newspaper that people trust. “A newspaper has to have the absolute confidence of the public. People have got to be able to believe every word they read. When you mess with that, you undermine the whole foundation.”⁸⁴ Grant’s integrity, professionalism and heroic qualities generate respect for him by his colleagues and aspiring journalists.

A HARD DRINKER

Even as a respected journalist, Grant is by no means perfect. He often takes a swig of alcohol, either to relieve stress or merely for enjoyment. The journalist who drinks too much has become a staple in movies. Journalists in motion pictures used alcohol to relieve the pressures and disappointments of the profession, and many became alcoholics.⁸⁵ One historian concluded, “Heavy drinking came to seem part of the job description of a newspaperman...From the 1920s through the 1990s, the journalist has been identifiable in Hollywood films as much by the drink in his hand as the cynical gleam in his eye.”⁸⁶ In *Murder Man* (1935), an editor describes his reporter as a “crazy, cynical, drunken bum.”⁸⁷

This was especially true for Grant in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* where his image as a journalist reveals a stereotypical hard drinker. “...Lou frequently repaired to a handy bottle of whiskey, which he kept in his right-hand drawer.”⁸⁸ Asner explains that Grant is “a man who enjoys his libations and establishing that from the first show.”⁸⁹ The premiere episode introduces Grant’s drinking behavior. When Richards steps into his office for an interview, Grant asks, “Look, Miss, I was just about to have a drink, and I wouldn’t mind some company. Want one?”⁹⁰ Grant pours alcohol into his coffee cup from behind his desk. As he talks to Richards, Grant sips what appears to be coffee but, in reality, is alcohol.⁹¹

Grant's predilection for alcohol seems to be one of his defining features. At any opportunity, Grant drinks liquor and thoroughly enjoys it. Anticipating a drink, Grant rushes Richards to get ready so that they can go together to the company dinner. "Hey listen, I don't want to go to this thing anymore than you do," he tells Richards. "But if we're late, we'll miss the best part: the drinking."⁹²

When Mark Williams writes an article about Richards and refers to "the hard-drinking Grant," Grant worries that people will find out about his drinking problem. He tells Richards that the article is disappointing: "Because the people who read this are going to think I'm a man who drinks as much as I drink... This isn't the kind of clipping I take upstairs to try to get a raise, is it?"⁹³

Even when Grant reminisces about his times working at a newspaper, he drops drinking into the conversation: "Back in the newspaper days, you know what we did when we needed extra help? We hired a wino. They make great coffee, and they don't have to be warm."⁹⁴ Drinking even assisted him in attaining his current job. He boasts to Richards: "You know how I got this job? I went into a saloon, got drunk, fell down and met Wild Jack Monroe under a table."⁹⁵

Ed Asner considers his Lou Grant character to be fond of drinking: "I guess my secret dream was to always have this fantastic bar where I create a happy hour with music and everything, encouraging people to sing. And nobody will sing,"⁹⁶ he tells his colleagues during *The Mary Tyler Moore Show Reunion* in 2002. In one episode, Grant's drunken behavior leads to his singing *Alexander's Ragtime Band*: "Come on along, come on along, let me take you by the hand. Up to the man, up to the man, who's the leader of the band."⁹⁷ Grant makes a fool out of himself by singing in the bar. "And as I start to sing and I keep looking around, trying to get

people to join in,” Asner says. “And they’re not joining in. So, finally, I get very ugly.”⁹⁸ His singing then turns into anger: “What the hell is wrong with you anyway? You just sit there like a bunch of clods. Now, we asked you nicely to sing along. That’s not too much, is it? To ask people to have a good time. SIT DOWN.”⁹⁹ While Grant’s drunkenness sometimes gets out of hand, it serves as a comic reflection of stereotypical journalists. Jim Brooks, creator and writer of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, says that “somebody will say, ‘You’ve been doing a lot of stuff about Grant drinking and getting laughs off it. It’s a little irresponsible.’ We’ll tend to listen to that because it makes sense to us.”¹⁰⁰ As a result, Grant’s drinking tendencies in the show diminished.

Grant seems to have toned down his indulgent drinking over time. In *Lou Grant*, Grant did not drink as heavily as he did in *The Mary Tyler Moore*. He was no longer defined by his alcohol intake. However, Grant and his colleagues at the *Tribune* frequented a local bar, McKenna’s and the bar is referred to in almost every episode of the show. Even though he goes there for business and for pleasure.

GRANT’S PERSONAL LIFE

Grant may be a hero in the world of the journalism, but his private side reveals a man with very human and realistic struggles. In journalism, Grant leads and commands his staff. In his personal life, he is a weaker person. His strength and command in the field of journalism compensate for his delicate, and at times, powerless behavior in his private life.

Journalists portrayed in movies, like Grant, were also married to their jobs and did not have time for much else. They always had a strong devotion to their work and getting that exclusive story. But movies exaggerated the tendencies of real-life journalists. While the real

reporters “would grudgingly miss a meal to meet a deadline, a fictional one must sacrifice his romance or marriage rather than miss a scoop.”¹⁰¹

In *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Grant begins to have marital problems with his wife, Edie. But, he loves his wife very much. As a result, the troubles personally destroy him. Grant seeks advice from Mary Richards. He goes to her apartment and tells Mary and Rhoda about his experiences with a marriage counselor:

We sit down in the waiting room. And I say, ‘Edie.’ And she says, ‘Why don’t we wait until we get inside?’ So, then we get inside. She pours out our guts to him for an hour. You know what bothers me? My marriage counselor isn’t married. He never has been. And you know, they want you to tell whatever is on your mind. So, I told him it sort of bothered me that he isn’t married. And he made a little joke. He said, ‘You don’t have to be a whale to write *Moby Dick*.’ So that’s my life now, Mary. Forty dollars an hour and he tells me he doesn’t have to be a whale.¹⁰²

The imminent divorce unveils a Grant without the confidence he possesses at WJM. As his marital problems continue develop, Grant “revealed a dimension of insecurity, even fear.”¹⁰³ When Edie says good-bye to Grant, he is completely saddened. He asks her, “How can you leave me Edie? How can you do it?” She replies, “Lou, it’s not you. It’s me. I’m 45 years old, Lou. You only go around once, and I want more.” Grant feels absolutely disheartened and depressed with Edie’s words. He cries, “You only go around once? That’s a beer commercial, Edie. You’re telling me you’re leaving me for a beer commercial, Edie.” When Edie begins to walk out the door, Grant says in desperation: “It wasn’t supposed to turn out this way. I had it all figured out. See, the way it goes is you change your mind, and you don’t leave.” But, when Edie continues to walk, Grant screams, “I love you, Edie.”¹⁰⁴ The episode not only reveals Grant going through a hardship, but it focuses on the male point of view. As Brooks puts it:

Then we had a show where she [Edie] didn’t come home, where she wanted to step out, where she reflected what was happening in society then. I thought it was good because we didn’t concentrate on her. In the other shows we’re doing that,

you know, women's rights. But here we concentrated on this guy left behind, sort of an old-fashioned guy hit by this.¹⁰⁵

Once they officially divorce, Grant begins to date women. His relationships also expose his traditional beliefs about marriage. In *Lou Grant*, he goes out with a police officer, Susan Sherman. She wants to move in with him, but Grant declines the offer. He believes in the old-school values of marriage. Grant explains to Susan:

You see, I think one reason why people live together instead of getting married is to keep their options open. When you say to me, 'Let's live together,' I always hear, 'And if it doesn't work out, we'll feel free to leave.' I split up a household once. It killed me. Boxes marked Edie. Boxes marked Lou. Packing up the kids' toys. I don't want to do it again. If you want to talk marriage, I'll talk marriage.¹⁰⁶

Grant never seems to have the ease in dating as he does in journalism. He goes out with an octogenarian woman,¹⁰⁷ a lounge singer¹⁰⁸ and even Mary's friend Rhoda. After Rhoda goes out with Grant, she tells Mary that he is so different from the men she usually dates. "You know, he's such a relief from the guys I have been going out with," she says. "I mean with Lou, a guy like that, you don't face that awkward moment when the guy takes you to the door. Lou leaves you at the curb."¹⁰⁹ But his most complex relationship is that with Mary Richards. Again, like his other dates, theirs is an awkward but "a brilliant conception, hilarious and true."¹¹⁰ Grant goes to Richard's apartment for dinner. They feel uncomfortable holding hands. Lou asks Mary, "My hand is sweaty isn't it?...I'm just not good at this."¹¹¹ And when they try to kiss each other, it turns into "a mighty case of the giggles."¹¹² Lou sizes it up like this: "That was really silly kissing you." And Mary replies, "Didn't that turn out to be just so dumb?"¹¹³

In *Lou Grant*, Grant demonstrates some of his weaknesses in dating. The show portrays how working hard as a journalist takes a toll on his social life. Grant meets a woman, Lynn, whom he really likes. He plans a date with her but work keeps him busy at the office. He calls

Lynn to apologize and hopes to still see her: "...Uh, come on, I can be there in five minutes...I got a new tie...How about Saturday night?...How about next week?...What's the point? I like you. I am only an hour late. Well, should I call you next week?...I'm sorry...Good bye."¹¹⁴ In the same episode, Newman also has trouble coping with her career and dating life. She cancels on her boyfriend, David, many times due to her busy job. Feeling sad, she tells Grant, "No more David. He told me to call him when I get out of this business."¹¹⁵ Clearly, this shows that Grant and fellow journalists so dedicated to their field pay a price in their personal lives. Nothing takes precedence over his work in journalism.

A NEWSROOM FAMILY

In both *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Lou Grant*, the journalism team can be seen as a family. Each person in the group represents an integral piece of the whole. In the newsroom, they work together as a team to produce a quality product. Grant sits close to the top of the hierarchy, but at the same time, remains a comrade to his staff – a father-figure and a friend.

Asner sees it this way:

I would say that as individualistic as actors are, they are still able to work greatly in concert with each other to make the product as if bonded by love for each other. Much more, I think, than journalists who always seem to be lone wolves. There is not a family feeling as there is in the performing art. Because you're out there alone. You're writing that story on your own. When you're on stage or in front of the camera, you're working with somebody else trying to create and generate that electricity.¹¹⁶

As actor Gavin MacLeod, who plays Murray Slaughter on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, puts it, Grant "was our leader. He was the producer of the news. He was the symbol of authority. What he also did was he became a friend of Murray's. He became a big brother to

Murray. He [Murray] would go to him with his problems. And Lou Grant would talk to him and advise him. He was always there...He cared for people.”¹¹⁷

Each person contributes something valuable to the family newsroom. The love that ties them together is strong. They are always there for each other, helping out their colleagues when in need. It was the show’s “constellation of characters that several writers and many observers have seen as typical of a family.”¹¹⁸ The many people who watched it “identified with this surrogate family.”¹¹⁹

In one episode of *Mary Tyler Moore*, the owner of WJM, Wild Jack Monroe (played by Slim Pickins), decides to fire Grant because of poor ratings. Mary Richards leads the news team on a journey to save Grant’s job. Ted Baxter, Murray Slaughter and the weatherman, Gordon (Gordy) Howard (played by John Amos) meet at Richard’s apartment to plan a strike. Richards is committed to her boss, Grant, just as he has always been committed to his staff. She declares:

Lou Grant is the best news director our station has ever had. And he’s about to be fired by a man who knows absolutely nothing about news. Plus the fact that every one of us in this room owes him so much we couldn’t ever repay him. Add to that, the fact that when some of us thought our jobs were in jeopardy, it was Lou Grant who was the first to put his job on the line for us.¹²⁰

In *Lou Grant*, Grant also was dedicated to his staff. At one point, Grant criticizes Rossi for not delving far enough into a story about abuses at mental hospitals. So, Rossi decides to check in as a patient at Glenview Hospital. After he does his research and is ready to leave, the hospital staff refuses to let him go because they think he is mentally ill.¹²¹ Meanwhile, the *Tribune* staff worries about Rossi whom they have not heard from for some time. Grant insists on going to the hospital to rescue Rossi. After an administrator at Glenview seems to be giving Grant a hard time, Grant yells, “I want access, and I want it now. I want to see our reporter in

this room in five minutes. So, get on it...And if you don't get him in here fast, I will have half the lawyers in this state swarming all over this room."¹²²

Grant acts like a father to Billie Newman. At Grant's housewarming party, Roger Trent (played by Edward Winter), a copy editor at the *Tribune*, flirts with her. When they leave the party, Newman confronts him about allegations that he abuses his wife. Trent then almost hits Newman.¹²³ She runs back to Grant's house for support. After Newman explains what happened, Grant responds, "I will kill him. I am going to go to his house, and I am going to punch him out."¹²⁴ Grant confronts Trent about the incident when he runs into him at a local bar. Grant tells Trent: "I get the urge, too, like right now. When I think of what you do to Dorothy [Roger's wife], what you almost did to Billie, I could knock your block off. But, I put a lid on it. Of course, some people can't."¹²⁵ Grant is dedicated to his co-workers because they are family to him.

In the episode "Takeover," media mogul Russell Grainger (played by John Anderson) attempts to buy the *Tribune*. In the past, Grainger has taken over newspapers and turned them into tabloids. So, the newspaper staff rallies against the takeover. They stand together as a family against this hasty bid. Grant exclaims to his newsroom: "Let's form a delegation and let the board know where we stand, how we feel. Let them know we are a family." Grant acts as the leader of his staff, protecting his newspaper and siphoning off evil forces. He reiterates to them: "Listen to me, everyone. We have to stick together. Let's not panic, OK? If the time comes and Grainger pulls this off, I'll lead you out of here. I promise. Right now, we have a paper to put out."¹²⁶

The characters and even the actors love each other as a family. This especially speaks for *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which uses the theme "Love is All Around." Gavin MacLeod

considers it a family of actors, writers and directors: “It was a big, big family. Utopia as far as television works.”¹²⁷

The family feeling in *Mary Tyler Moore* culminates in the last episode. Even preparation for that show depicts a family growing apart. Actor Ted Knight, who played Ted Baxter, made this evaluation: “We’re getting too near the end. We’re experiencing separation anxiety!”¹²⁸

Moore concurred, “Regarding the last episode, I remember the last month before the last episode and how it really was beginning to affect us all...this separation anxiety that we had.”¹²⁹

MacLeod agreed that it was like a close family torn apart: “I was so sad that whole last year because it was a family. It really was a family. When you look back now, it was even more precious than it was then.”¹³⁰

The premise for the last show was that everyone gets fired from WJM News except Anchorman Ted Baxter. It was an emotional episode where the characters literally spell out their true feelings. Robert S. Alley and Irby B. Brown, authors of *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, describe the final show in this way: “The plot, as usual, would be relatively simple, befitting the half-hour format. But the emotional burden would be huge – daunting, in fact.”¹³¹ In this episode, even the hard-edged Grant speaks from his heart when he says, “I treasure you people.”¹³² With all the trials and tribulations, Grant nevertheless loves his staff, and they love him. At the 2002 *Reunion* show, Asner recollects that statement: “I could never have been more sincere or have been or will be in my life.”¹³³

Everyone in the newsroom – Mary Richards, Lou Grant, Murray Slaughter, Sue Ann Nivens, Ted and Georgette Franklin (Ted’s girlfriend and then wife played by Georgia Engel) -- group hug with tears in their eyes. Engel recalls, “What I remember on that actual night when we were doing the hug, these great big men were bawling. They were crying for real.”¹³⁴ Weeks

later, Moore hosted a dinner at Chasen's for everyone involved in the show. Betty White, who played Sue Ann, explains this episode's emotional effect:

We had dinner, and we watched the show. We didn't realize until we got that perspective how funny the episode was. But when we got to the last scene, and Ed Asner said, "I treasure you people," there was a sob through Chasen's that shook Beverly Hills. And then the waterworks. I have yet to see that last episode except under water.¹³⁵

But the most touching aspect of that episode was Richard's speech to her friends and co-workers about family. She tells them:

Well, I just wanted you to know that sometimes I get concerned about being a career woman. I get to thinking my job is too important to me, and I tell myself that the people I work with are just the people I work with. And not my family. And last night, I thought, 'What is a family anyway?' They're just people who make you feel less alone and really loved. And that's what you've done for me. Thank you for being my family.¹³⁶

In just a few seconds, Richards summarizes the meaning of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and how journalism works at WJM. For this station, it is about a family working together to produce good journalism. "I think every creative effort is better when everybody works together for the show. And that's what the MTM show was about," MacLeod says. "And that's a family, and that's what a family is about. You go through everything, but you're still together."¹³⁷

A REALISTIC PORTRAYAL

Both television shows reveal bits of real life in a newsroom. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* depicts journalists working for a small TV news station in Minneapolis while *Lou Grant* shows reporters working for a metropolitan daily newspaper in Los Angeles.

Even a situation comedy, like *The Mary Tyler Moore*, which is filled with jokes, can depict real aspects of television journalism and the people who make up the field. As Asner puts it, "When you can find the way to do it, humor can reveal important truths in a refined, slow

way, as Charlie Chaplin did in *The Great Dictator*.”¹³⁸ *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which broke new ground in TV dealing with the life of a single working woman, also dealt with significant journalistic issues such as the use of anonymous sources, the tyranny of ratings, covering political elections on TV news, protecting news sources, First Amendment rights. But, more importantly, the characters – the people who make up the newsroom – albeit exaggerated, are real. The staff who works at WJM News represent real-life journalists. Asner recalls visiting television news stations in the 1970s during the time the show was aired. “One of the first things they would do is to point out their ‘Mary’ to me and certainly their ‘Ted,’” he says. “And very many times I would have their ‘Ted’ come up to me and say, ‘I’m Ted’ as if they delighted in being that particular pompous ass that people laughed at so much in *Mary Tyler Moore*.”¹³⁹ MacLeod also sees the characters representing a certain sect of the television industry. He would also visit television news stations. “There was a guy at an ABC station who said to me, ‘I am Murray. I bring my lunch in a brown paper bag. I do all the work,’” MacLeod recollects. “There is truth to all of those characters. We did represent people that existed. I used to call it a situation life show because of some of the subjects they really dealt with.”¹⁴⁰

One of the writers of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Bob Ellison, considers realism the key to the television series. Ellison describes it as a different type of reality:

But by realism I don’t mean the disease-of-the-week show. I did admire *All in the Family*, *Maude*, shows like that. They managed to be funny, also. But that was always the parting of the ways – the Norman Lear camp and the MTM camp. We did things that were a little simpler, perhaps, and we left the abortions and diseases to Lear, who did them very well. Our realism was of a different sort.¹⁴¹

Perhaps some of Lou Grant’s realism comes from Ed Asner’s own experience as a journalist. Asner attended Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, Kansas and was feature editor of the school newspaper, *The Pantagraph*. “I loved the idea of being able to annotate

history, of helping people visualize history as it's happening," he recalls. "My fellow students praised my writing, so I naturally felt I showed promise in journalism and seriously considered a career in the field."¹⁴² Asner says he was dissuaded by his journalism teacher: "One day my journalism professor came in while I was sitting at my desk. And I revered this man. 'Are you thinking of journalism as a career?' And I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'I wouldn't.' Terribly hurt, crest-fallen, I said 'Why not?' He said, 'You can't make a living out of it.' I said, 'Oh, OK.' I immediately dispensed with journalism as a career and went on to become an overnight sensation as an actor."¹⁴³

Between *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Lou Grant*, Asner spent much of his career acting as a journalist. Asner's prior journalism experience may have given him the tools he needed in portraying Lou Grant. As Asner puts it, "I don't know if it helped me. But it gave me a cache that I could brag about without any substance."¹⁴⁴

Asner describes the transition from Lou Grant in the 30-minute sitcom to Lou Grant in the one-hour drama as hell. "To take a character out of a comedy and place him into a drama or dramedy is like going from the bright side to the dark side of the moon," Asner says. "It's a totally different world."¹⁴⁵ Asner recalls the producers telling him that he had to remember who Grant was. "'You've got to maintain that Lou persona and keep him the impelling force,'" Asner said they kept telling him. "So, I got there and was trying to be Lou from Mary in an hour dramatic show. It was like pulling teeth," he says.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Asner considers *Lou Grant* "one of the accomplishments I'm proudest of as an actor."¹⁴⁷ He says the show was a learning experience for him and the millions of viewers who watched it. "Doing *Lou Grant* was a constant education," he says. "And for that I'll always

be grateful for that series for what I learned not only about how the press works, how the denizens who form it live and operate, but also something about the real world.”¹⁴⁸

The *Lou Grant* television series portrays journalists working in a daily newspaper realistically and accurately. *The Mary Tyler Moore* should not be written off because it was a comedy – it, too, depicted journalism realistically. The *Lou Grant* show not only covered all of the key news topics, but it also raised concerns regarding significant journalism issues such as conflict of interest, plagiarism and balanced coverage. *Lou Grant* also shows the audience the inner workings of a daily newspaper informing the public how the press functions on a day-to-day basis. For example, the following diatribe that Grant spews to Newman gives viewers an inside look at the inner workings of a newspaper:

Hey, listen. In L.A. today there were a hundred things that needed to be covered. Out of that 100, I picked 15 that I thought had to be covered, and I sent the people out there. When those reporters get back they will all be convinced that they've got front page stuff. But they're going to have to sell me first because in order for me to go in there and sell it, I've got to be convinced. Don't keep telling me about this poor woman. Give me the ammunition to sell it because I'm not going there unarmed.¹⁴⁹

The producers of *Lou Grant* initially “believed that that new series should accurately portray journalism, which they thought no other television series had done.”¹⁵⁰ The 1976 movie *All the President's Men* influenced their decision to make the show realistic and accurate.

Producer Alan Burns recalls the impact that motion picture had on their ideas for *Lou Grant*:

We'd all seen it, and we'd all been absolutely fascinated by the depiction of the putting together of a story, the nuts and bolts of how a big-time newspaper operation worked. It was absolutely fascinating to us. And we said, jeez, we've never seen this before, the budget meetings and all that stuff...And we had to believe that America would be interested in seeing that done right. And who better than Ed Asner in a show about a newspaper where we're really trying to do it accurately, as accurately as we can.¹⁵¹

The producers, writers and actors from *Lou Grant* did their homework. They met with editors and reporters from newspapers so that they could accurately portray real-life journalists. Most of the research came from the *Los Angeles Times*, which “became the most important contact for the creators of *Lou Grant*.”¹⁵² “I went down constantly,” Gene Reynolds, one of the show’s key producers, says. “They had a little room for us. I’d say we interviewed between 20 and 30 of their people, editors and reporters.”¹⁵³ The series was grounded in their extensive journalism research – “their visits to the *Los Angeles Times* and other newspapers, the books and trade journals they had read, and the journalism classes they had taken contributed to their sense of what kinds of people would be working in the *Tribune* newsroom.”¹⁵⁴

In seeking to make the series realistic, many of the episodes were based on real-life situations. For example, the storyline behind the “Nazi” episode was almost identical to an incident in 1965 where a story by a *New York Times* reporter led to the suicide of a Jewish Nazi.¹⁵⁵ “Hoax” was based on a real-life incident in which the *Los Angeles Times* followed a tip that kidnapped newspaper heiress Patty Hearst was being held in Hong Kong.¹⁵⁶ In “Cophouse,” a *Tribune* reporter covers up a police sex scandal, which was a true story the *Los Angeles Times* relayed to the *Lou Grant* team.¹⁵⁷

In fact, the show often seemed so real that fiction and reality blurred. In Philadelphia, an investigative reporter wrote a series of articles exposing questionable activities of a businessman, which led to a grand jury indictment. Following the hearing, the reporter approached the businessman saying, “Hey, listen. I’m sorry. I was just doing my job.” The businessman supposedly responded, “Don’t worry, I understand. I watch *Lou Grant*.”¹⁵⁸ Asner says he remembers hearing that the Supreme Court justices would discuss the show in chambers.¹⁵⁹

The assistant managing editor of the *Times*, George Cotliar, acknowledges that other fictional portrayals of journalists never did justice to the field. “If your feeling is that you go to a movie or turn on TV and you see a newspaper person being portrayed as a lowlife or drunkard or an incompetent, it gets to you, just as doctors would think a number of the doctor shows would be demeaning,” he says. “Whatever it was we saw really didn’t portray journalists in any way, shape or form that approximated what we do.”¹⁶⁰

The creators of *Lou Grant* took a different path by portraying the truths of print journalism. They sought “to reject the journalistic stereotypes they believed had flourished for decades in motion pictures and television.”¹⁶¹ *Lou Grant* is “the most realistic depiction of newspaper journalism on television,” writes Douglass K. Daniel in *Lou Grant: The Making of TV’s Top Newspaper Drama*.¹⁶² *Lou Grant* depicts journalists the way they want to be portrayed – in a positive light. In fact, the drama was popular among journalists “because it brought to life their ethical dilemmas and, more importantly, the human side of covering the news in ways that no other television drama had managed to do.”¹⁶³ Even journalists believe that the *Lou Grant* series portrayed their field fairly and accurately. As Narda Zacchino, a former *Los Angeles Times* associate editor, put it: “They did a fabulous job of being really true to life. I thought they did a superlative job of actually creating in dramatic form what happens in real life.”¹⁶⁴

The *Lou Grant* series ran successfully for five years, producing 114 episodes. CBS officials announced the cancellation of the show on May 6, 1982, citing ratings as the reason. However, some believe that the culprit was Asner’s political activism. *Lou Grant* fans saw the actor on television not only during the show. Dan Rather reported on the evening news on February 15, 1982: “Television’s Lou Grant, actor Ed Asner, was in Washington today. He led a group of show-business personalities opposed to President Reagan’s policy in El

Salvador...”¹⁶⁵ Several months earlier, Asner had been elected president of the Screen Actors Guild. *Los Angeles Times* writer Harry Bernstein wrote: “Asner will have the dual platform of speaking as a famous actor in the role of conscientious newspaper editor and as president of a politically influential union.”¹⁶⁶ But, since *Lou Grant* seemed so real, it was hard to differentiate reality from fiction. Should an editor of a major metropolitan newspaper be politically active? Writer Michele Gallery observed that “people were looking at the character of Lou Grant and seeing Ed Asner.”¹⁶⁷ The Rev. Jerry Falwell accused Asner of defying American policy. “Are we supposed to stand idly by and allow Hollywood radicals to dictate America’s foreign policy?” he asked.¹⁶⁸ In a column Asner wrote for *The New York Times*, he defended his entitlement to be critical of American government. “I think that it’s not only a right, but an obligation for every responsible citizen to speak out when our government is acting in ways we believe are wrong,” he wrote.¹⁶⁹ Yet, the ratings were sinking. Writer Steve Kline felt the decline was attributed to viewers who disliked Asner’s activism. “Once Ed started going on television, I knew it right away,” he says. “I never once decried his right to say what he felt, but the way he said it was almost guaranteed to get the show thrown off.”¹⁷⁰

When the series ended, journalists were disappointed. One of their heroes was no longer around. For them, Lou Grant was as real as any city editor they had known in real life. The *Detroit Free Press* wrote an obituary for the fictional character, calling Lou Grant “one of the best-known and most widely respected journalists of his day.”¹⁷¹ The paper called Lou Grant “the editor we wished we had, the editor every editor wanted to be.”¹⁷² The *Lansing State Journal* in Michigan wrote a farewell editorial: “It is one of those rare Hollywood productions that tried to present a picture of the newspaper business as it is today.”¹⁷³ Columnist David Israel wrote in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* that the series was “the best thing television – which

had killed more newspapers than inept publishers or apathetic readers – ever did for our business.” Lou Grant stands as a landmark television drama about journalism. “As a weekly series, *Lou Grant* brought a distinctive element of substance to the television schedule,” *New York Times* critic John J. O’Connor wrote as the show came to a close: “Television has lost one of its worthier efforts.”¹⁷⁴

Overall, the character Lou Grant portrays a real journalist who actually works to improve society. Reynolds describes Grant as “a very earthy diamond-in-the-rough. Tough, smart, vulnerable, not a terribly sophisticated guy. A good newsman, a very experienced newsman – canny, shrewd – a tough newsman.”¹⁷⁵ Both series reveal that journalists can do good work and not be out for themselves. “I think the press needs me,” Asner once told a reporter. “I think there is a great deal of antagonism toward the Fourth Estate, and there always has been.”¹⁷⁶ Terrence O’Flaherty of the *San Francisco Chronicle* agrees: “Most newspapermen probably consider him a very good spokesman for the profession.”¹⁷⁷ As Asner puts it: “I think we showed the nobility of news hawks, of news reporting. I think we showed them that there is a strong intelligent world out there, which if pursued cleanly, can be greatly contributive to its readership.”¹⁷⁸

Joe Saltzman, an award-winning journalist who is professor of journalism, and director of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC) at USC Annenberg, summed up the appeal of Lou Grant for professional journalists this way: “Lou Grant epitomized many of the print journalists who in the 1960s and early 1970s went into television news bringing with them the news judgment, professionalism and the ethical sensitivity of the newspaper journalist. By the mid-1970s, many of these former newspaper people became disillusioned with TV news because the Ted Baxters were dominating over the Lou Grants. The Lou Grants either became

disheartened alcoholics or went into another profession such as public relations or, like Grant, stumbled back into newspapers where they remained for the rest of their careers.”

LEGACY OF LOU GRANT

Both *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Lou Grant* were highly acclaimed series that received numerous Emmys. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* received 29 Emmy Awards.¹⁷⁹ The sitcom has been “considered a magic moment in television history. It was never at the top of the ratings chart, yet was always respectably placed, and now time has led to the critical assessment that it stands as the ‘classic’ television comedy.”¹⁸⁰ The show’s legacy continues to this day. When broadcast journalist Katie Couric left the *Today* show to become news anchor of the *CBS Evening News*, she made a comment that illustrates the longevity of TV journalists’ image. “The audience is more sophisticated than we give them credit for – they don’t want a mechanical Ted Baxter,” she said.¹⁸¹

The *Lou Grant* series received 56 Emmy nominations and 13 awards. It also won a Peabody Award for its “entertaining yet realistic look at the problems and issues which face those involved in the Fourth Estate.”¹⁸²

Since both shows were so well liked, the image of Lou Grant as a journalist influenced millions of fans who enjoyed each series. For the most part, *The Mary Tyler Moore* respected its TV journalists although it was the first TV program to mock a TV anchorman. *Lou Grant* realistically portrayed print journalists showing the hard work they do on a daily basis. In both shows, Grant continually conveyed a sense of journalistic integrity. Despite his human flaws – a gruff attitude, drinking habits – Grant’s image is that of a heroic journalist.

Lou Grant also inspired young people to pursue the field of journalism. Michael W. Sasser, editor of the *Sun Post* in Miami says that growing up with the *Lou Grant* series helped influence his career choice by making journalism look exciting. “It looked like something that was filled with intelligent people who were involved and committed to things going on around them,” Sasser says. “And it took people from sort of an everyday, ordinary-type background and exposed them to the unusual.”¹⁸³

Asner acknowledges that his character has inspired people to become journalists. “I feel very guilty because over the years, I’ve come into contact with a lot of younger people who became journalists who spoke of the influence *Lou Grant* had on choosing their life calling,” Asner reveals. “I felt guilty about that. Don’t blame me.”¹⁸⁴

Lou Grant is often remembered as a distinguished journalist even though he is only a fictional character. Asner is honored that people still think of him as Lou Grant. He says, “I’m very often referred to that way. He was a very honorable man. I couldn’t do better than being mistaken for him.”¹⁸⁵

While Ed Asner remains an actor and not a journalist, he still works to improve the profession. “My job is to act and to get the greatest meaning out of the simplest line. And if I do that well and interestingly, then I will have done my part for journalism,” he says.¹⁸⁶

Endnotes

¹ Ed Asner, interview with the author, Los Angeles, Calif., March 20, 2006.

² Joe Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film* (Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture, a project of the Norman Lear Center, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 2002), p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵ Episode 1: "Love Is All Around," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired September 19, 1970, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Jay Sandrich. Written by James L. Brooks and Allan Burns.

⁶ Episode 85: "I Gave at the Office," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired December 8, 1973, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Don Reo and Allan Katz.

⁷ Episode 101: "The Outsider," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired October 12, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Peter Bonerz. Written by Jack Winter.

⁸ Episode 93: "Ted Baxter Meets Walter Cronkite," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired February 9, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Ed. Weinberger.

⁹ Episode 164: "Murray Ghosts for Ted," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired February 19, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by David Lloyd.

¹⁰ Episode 28: "Room 23," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired October 9, 1971, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Susan Silver.

¹¹ Robert S. Alley and Irby B. Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (Dell Publishing, New York, 1989), p. 101.

¹² Episode 76: "The Lou and Edie Story," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired October 6, 1973, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Treva Silverman.

¹³ Episode 1: "Love Is All Around," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

¹⁴ Episode 49: "The Good-Time News," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired September 16, 1972, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Hal Cooper. Written by Brooks and Burns.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 103.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Editors used female reporters to cover the human angle or color sidebar of a story. "If somebody accused of a crime happened to be a woman, a female reporter might be assigned to play up the emotional aspects of the story. Or, if the accused was a man, he might have a wife, girl friend or mother" whom the female reporter could interview and play up any heart-tugging angles, any emotional aspect of the story. "What they wrote came to be referred to as *sob stories*" and female reporters came to be known, at least in the movies, as *sob sisters*. Alex Barris, *Stop the*

Presses! The Newspaperman in American Films (A.S. Barnes and Co., Inc., Cranbury, NJ, 1976), p. 139. As quoted in Joe Saltzman's article, "Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist in Popular Culture," (ijpc.org, 2003).

¹⁹ *Mary Tyler Moore: The 20th Anniversary Show*. First aired February 18, 1991.

²⁰ Episode 49: "The Good-Time News," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

²¹ Episode 110: "A Girl Like Mary," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired December 14, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Ann Gibbs and Joel Kimmel.

²² Episode 13: "Christmas," *Lou Grant*. First aired December 13, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Burrows. Written by Lloyd.

²³ Episode 6: "Aftershock," *Lou Grant*. First aired October 25, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Jud Taylor. Written by Del Reisman.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Episode 50: "Charlatan," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired October 15, 1979, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Roger Young. Written by Michael Vittes.

²⁶ Episode 48: "Exposé," *Lou Grant*. First aired September 24, 1979, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Gene Reynolds. Written by Lloyd.

²⁷ Episode 50: "Charlatan," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

²⁸ Episode 48: "Exposé," *Lou Grant*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Episode 50: "Charlatan," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

³¹ Episode 48: "Exposé," *Lou Grant*.

³² Asner interview, March 20, 2006.

³³ Douglass K. Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama* (Syracuse University Press, New York, 1996), p. 33.

³⁴ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 100.

³⁵ Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*, p. 9.

³⁶ Episode 1: "Love Is All Around," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

³⁷ Episode 76: "The Lou and Edie Story," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

³⁸ Episode 99: "You Sometimes Hurt the One You Hate," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired September 28, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Jackie Cooper. Written by Lloyd.

³⁹ Ibid.

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- ⁴⁰ Episode 161: "Sue Ann Gets the Ax," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired January 29, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Bob Ellison.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Episode 6: "Aftershock," *Lou Grant*.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Episode 22: "Physical," *Lou Grant*. First aired March 20, 1978, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Charles Dubin. Written by Lloyd.
- ⁴⁵ Episode 27: "Murder," *Lou Grant*. First aired October 30, 1978, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Mel Damski. Written by David Goldberg.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.
- ⁴⁸ Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama*, p. 103.
- ⁴⁹ Episode 24: "The Forty-Five-Year-Old Man," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired March 6, 1971, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Herbert Kenwith. Written by George Kirgo.
- ⁵⁰ Episode 7: "Barrio," *Lou Grant*. First aired November 1, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Mel Damski. Written by Seth Freeman.
- ⁵¹ Episode 88: "WJM Tries Harder," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired January 5, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Karyl Geld.
- ⁵² Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 103.
- ⁵³ Episode 88: "WJM Tries Harder," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ⁵⁴ Episode 49: "The Good-Time News," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Episode 77: "Hi There, Sports Fans," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired October 13, 1973, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Jerry Mayer.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Episode 141: "Mary's Aunt Returns," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired February 7, 1976, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Lloyd.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.

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- ⁶² Episode 1: "Cophouse," *Lou Grant*. First aired September 20, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Reynolds. Written by Tokatyan.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Episode 5: "Nazi," *Lou Grant*. First aired October 18, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Alexander Singer. Written by Robert Schlitt.
- ⁷⁰ Episode 24: "Prisoner," *Lou Grant*. First aired October 2, 1978, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Reynolds. Written by Seth Freeman.
- ⁷¹ Episode 14: "Airliner," *Lou Grant*. First aired January 3, 1978, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Mel Damski. Written by Charles Einstein.
- ⁷² Ibid.
- ⁷³ Episode 5: "Nazi," *Lou Grant*.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*, p. 84.
- ⁷⁶ Episode 10: "Psych-Out," *Lou Grant*. First aired November 22, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Singer. Written by Freeman.
- ⁷⁷ Episode 15: "Sports," *Lou Grant*. First aired January 10, 1978, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Harvey Laidman. Written by Bud Freeman.
- ⁷⁸ Episode 65: "Lou," *Lou Grant*. First aired February 11, 1980, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Roger Young. Written by Michele Gallery.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ Episode 19: "Scandal," *Lou Grant*. First aired February 13, 1978, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Mel Damski. Written by Charles Einstein.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Episode 65: "Lou," *Lou Grant*.
- ⁸³ Episode 48: "Exposé," *Lou Grant*.
- ⁸⁴ Episode 22: "Physical," *Lou Grant*.

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- ⁸⁵ Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*, p. 28.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Deac Rossell, "Hollywood and the Newsroom," *American Films*, October, 1975, p. 17.
- ⁸⁸ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 101.
- ⁸⁹ *The Mary Tyler Moore Reunion*. First aired May 13, 2002.
- ⁹⁰ Episode 1: "Love Is All Around," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Episode 94: "Lou's Second Date," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired February 16, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Jerry London. Written by Weinberger.
- ⁹³ Episode 50: "What Is Mary Richards Really Like?" *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired September 23, 1972, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Jerry Belson. Written by Susan Silver.
- ⁹⁴ Episode 85: "I Gave at the Office," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ⁹⁵ Episode 24: "The Forty-Five-Year-Old Man," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ⁹⁶ *The Mary Tyler Moore Reunion*.
- ⁹⁷ Episode 64: "Lou's Place" *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired January 6, 1973, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Weinberger.
- ⁹⁸ *The Mary Tyler Moore Reunion*.
- ⁹⁹ Episode 64: "Lou's Place" *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ¹⁰⁰ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 101.
- ¹⁰¹ Barris, *Stop the Presses! The Newspaperman in American Films*, p 15.
- ¹⁰² Episode 76: "The Lou and Edie Story," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ¹⁰³ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 49.
- ¹⁰⁴ Episode 76: "The Lou and Edie Story," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ¹⁰⁵ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 106.
- ¹⁰⁶ Episode: "Lou," *Lou Grant*.
- ¹⁰⁷ Episode 80: "Lou's First Date," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired November 3, 1973, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Weinberger and Daniels.
- ¹⁰⁸ Episode 100: "Lou and That Woman," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired October 5, 1974, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Lloyd.

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- ¹⁰⁹ “Episode 94: Lou’s Second Date,” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ¹¹⁰ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 106.
- ¹¹¹ Episode 167: “Lou Dates Mary,” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired March 12, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Lloyd.
- ¹¹² Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 106.
- ¹¹³ Episode 167: “Lou Dates Mary,” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ¹¹⁴ Episode 7: “Barrio,” *Lou Grant*.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁶ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.
- ¹¹⁷ Gavin MacLeod, interview with the author, Los Angeles, Calif., May 16, 2006.
- ¹¹⁸ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 43.
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁰ Episode 24: “The Forty-Five-Year-Old Man,” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.
- ¹²¹ Episode 10: “Psych-Out,” *Lou Grant*.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*
- ¹²³ Episode 11: “Housewarming,” *Lou Grant*. First aired November 29, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Mel Damski. Written by Leonora Thuna.
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁶ Episode 12: “Takeover,” *Lou Grant*. First aired December 6, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Reynolds. Written by Tokatyan.
- ¹²⁷ MacLeod interview, May 16, 2006.
- ¹²⁸ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, pp. 157-158.
- ¹²⁹ *The Mary Tyler Moore Reunion*.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹³¹ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 154.
- ¹³² Episode 168: “The Last Show,” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. First aired March 19, 1977, CBS, MTM Productions. Directed by Sandrich. Written by Burns, Brooks, Weinberger, Daniels, Lloyd and Ellison.
- ¹³³ *The Mary Tyler Moore Reunion*.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Robert S. Alley and Irby B. Brown, p. 160.

¹³⁶ Episode 168: “The Last Show,” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

¹³⁷ MacLeod interview, May 16, 2006.

¹³⁸ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 102.

¹³⁹ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.

¹⁴⁰ MacLeod interview, May 16, 2006

¹⁴¹ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, p. 74.

¹⁴² Ed Asner, Foreword in Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV’s Top Newspaper Drama*, p. ix.

¹⁴³ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ed Asner, Foreword, p. x.

¹⁴⁸ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.

¹⁴⁹ Episode 27: “Murder,” *Lou Grant*.

¹⁵⁰ Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV’s Top Newspaper Drama*, p/23.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹⁵⁸ Ed Asner, “Ed Asner Sees ‘No Excuse for Poor Quality’ on Television,” *U.S. News & World Report*, July 23, 1979, p. 52.

¹⁵⁹ Ed Asner, Foreword, p. x.

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- ¹⁶⁰ Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama*, p. 25.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ¹⁶² Ed Asner, Foreword, p. xvi.
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁴ Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama*, pp. 153-154.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- ¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ¹⁷¹ Ed Asner, Foreword, p. xvi.
- ¹⁷² Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama*, p. 150.
- ¹⁷³ Ed Asner, Foreword, p. xvi.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.
- ¹⁷⁵ Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama*, p. 33.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷⁸ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.
- ¹⁷⁹ Alley and Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, pp. 225-227.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 229.
- ¹⁸¹ Katie Couric, "Perspectives," *Newsweek*, June 12, 2006, p. 21.
- ¹⁸² Asner, Foreword, pp. xv-xvi.
- ¹⁸³ Joal Ryan, "Lou Grant Made Me Do It," *American Journalism Review*, November 1996, p. 13.
- ¹⁸⁴ Asner interview, March 20, 2006.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama*, p. 35.

Do you get inspired by famous journalists and the righteous persona they represent? What are those qualities that make them stand out of the crowd? From courage to honesty, integrity to determination, there are some essential qualities that a professional journalist possesses. If you are aspiring to make a career in journalism, you should have these qualities. *A Way with Words*. Directed by Alexander Singer. Lou Grant 1977 - 1982. [prev](#) [next](#). [Overview](#). The trials of the former TV station manager, turned newspaper city editor, and his journalist staff. The trials of the former TV station manager, turned newspaper city editor, and his journalist staff. (less). Directors: Alexander Singer, Roger Young, Burt Brinckerhoff, Gene Reynolds, Peter Levin, Mel Damski Writers: James L. Brooks, Allan Burns, Gene Reynolds Starring: Edward Asner, Robert Walden, Mason Adams, Jack Bannon, Daryl Anderson, Nancy Marchand. Earlier on Friday I asked about favorite journalists from TV sitcoms and dramas. Here's my collection of some of the characters people suggested on Twitter and Facebook: Lou Grant, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Lou Grant: Miranda Veracruz De La Hoya Cardinal, *Married With Children*: Murphy Brown, *Murphy Brown*: Perd Hapley, *Parks and Recreation*: Carl Kolchak, *The Night Stalker*: Lynda Day, *Press Gang*: Will McAvoy, *The Newsroom*