

THE MAGAZINE FOR READING AND ENGLISH

Read[®]

VOL. XXIV/NO. 2/SEPTEMBER 20, 1974

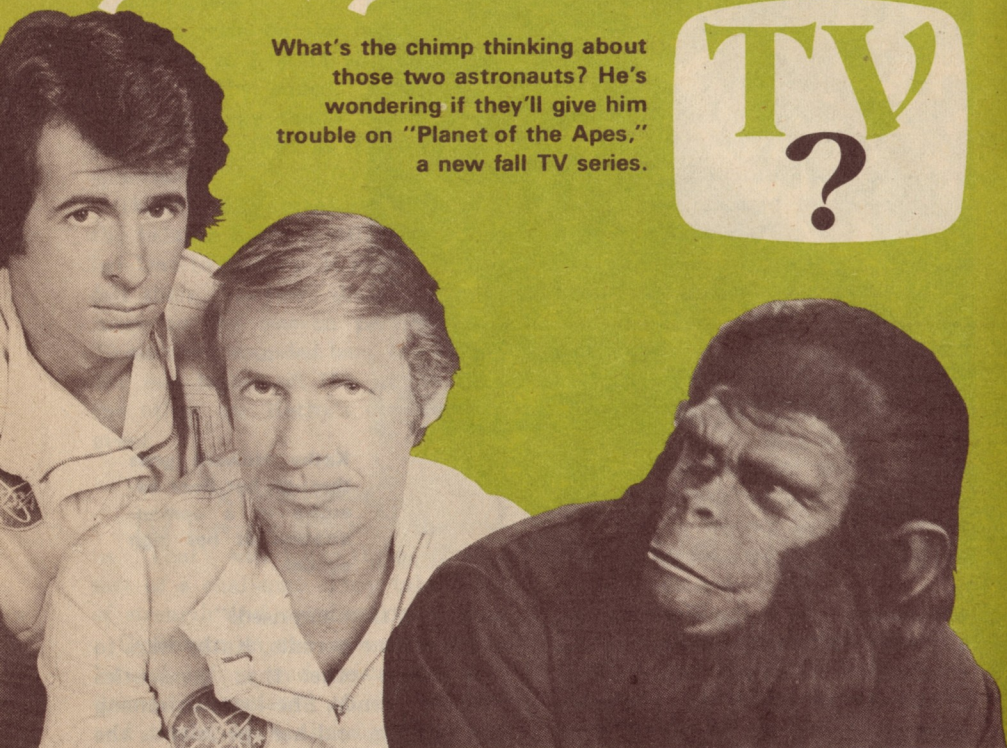
Sailing a cycle



going APE on

What's the chimp thinking about those two astronauts? He's wondering if they'll give him trouble on "Planet of the Apes," a new fall TV series.

TV?



—CBS-TV and 20th Century-Fox

Here's a bit of progress for you. First there was the movie *Planet of the Apes*, in which some astronauts passed through a time warp and landed on a strange planet. It turned out to be Earth 1,500 years from now—when upright walking and smart-mouth talking chimps and gorillas ruled over man—the “inferior animal” species.

Then came *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, in which another astronaut landed on Ape Earth and discovered a race of superintelligent men living underground. The chimps, however, were still on top.

Following that, *Escape from you-*

know-what showed two intelligent chimps coming back to present-day Earth, creating havoc and bearing a child chimp named Caesar.

The series didn't end there, however. In the last two movies—*Conquest of* and *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*—the grown-up Caesar leads forces of apes against human beings.

The world almost comes to a final end but is saved when the apes and men decide to live and work together in peace.

Where to go from there? Well, how about back to the beginning? That's just what's happening this fall on CBS-TV. *Planet of the Apes* will be-

come a full hour weekly series, beginning where the first movie began—with astronauts going through a time warp and landing on a planet ruled over by apes.

RODDY MCDOWALL

As we said, progress, right? Well, if you think you're tired of it all, just imagine how Roddy McDowall feels. He's been in ape makeup more than he's been out of it over the last four years, because he appeared in four of the Ape movies. Now Roddy's back behind a monkey face in the new series.

Wondering if he feels like a monkey's uncle by now, we spoke to Roddy to find out more about *Planet*.

Here's what he had to say:

The TV series isn't going to be all that different from the movies. Two astronauts will go through a time warp and land on Earth 1,500 years from now. Apes will be the superior race—with the chimps the intellectuals, the orangutans the wise rulers, and the gorillas the brutal policemen. Humans—who can speak and think—will be their slaves or will live in slums.

Of course, I'll play a chimp, but it won't be Caesar. His story ended with the movies. Instead, I'll play a chimp named Galen who meets up with the astronauts and then comes to believe in them. Galen tries to help these men return to their own time period. And each episode of the series will be just another chapter of their struggle to get back.

I really don't mind playing a chimp. It's a challenging role to play someone—or some thing—other than yourself. And the funny thing is, I didn't really do any special research

for the role. I simply asked myself how an intelligent chimp might walk and stand. Then I invented a semi-animal waddle by crouching as I walk and letting my arms swing loosely.

The one thing that is difficult about my role is the heat under all that makeup. It takes close to three hours to put it on in the morning and about an hour to remove it at night. I can work with the makeup—smiling and frowning—but it gets terribly hot under there. Whenever we take a break for lunch, I don't even bother to eat, although I could if I wanted to, through straws and all that.

TREATED LIKE ANIMAL

Wearing ape makeup and playing a chimp has taught me a few things about human beings. For instance, when made up as an ape, you're really treated like an animal. You lose your identity as a human and, in some ways, become an ape. People stare and laugh. They want to touch you. It's very understandable why monkeys spit at people at the zoo.

*Our show will be entertaining and fun, of course. But it is a dramatic series, not a comedy. So we will have a message. We'll be making comments about human beings by showing how the apes act toward the lesser creatures. *Planet* will be about apes, yes. But as our producer once put it, we'll be doing a people series.*

Well, we'll be waiting to see how a show in which the stars are animals can be a people series. And meanwhile, we advise our readers to be careful about what they say or do when standing in front of a monkey cage at the zoo. You never know who—or what—might be eavesdropping. Or making plans for you. ■