

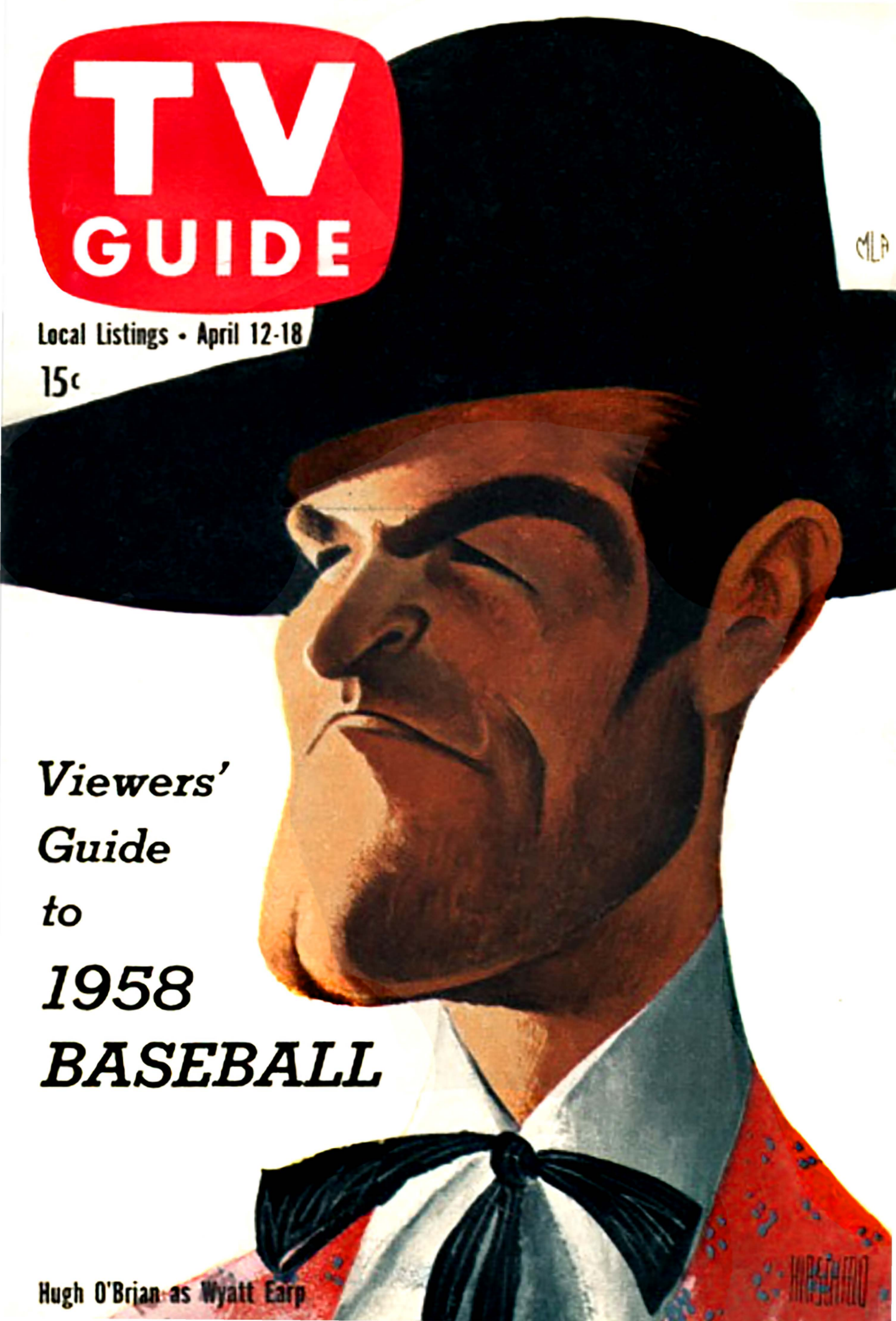
**TV  
GUIDE**

Local Listings • April 12-18

15c

*Viewers'  
Guide  
to  
1958  
BASEBALL*

Hugh O'Brian as Wyatt Earp



MLA

WIP-SCHIZO

*Those who know him best—his press agents—*

*tell what they really think*

*of Hugh O'Brian*



If no man is a hero to his valet, no show-business personality is a hero to his press agent. One Hollywood publicity firm puts it this way to a prospective client:

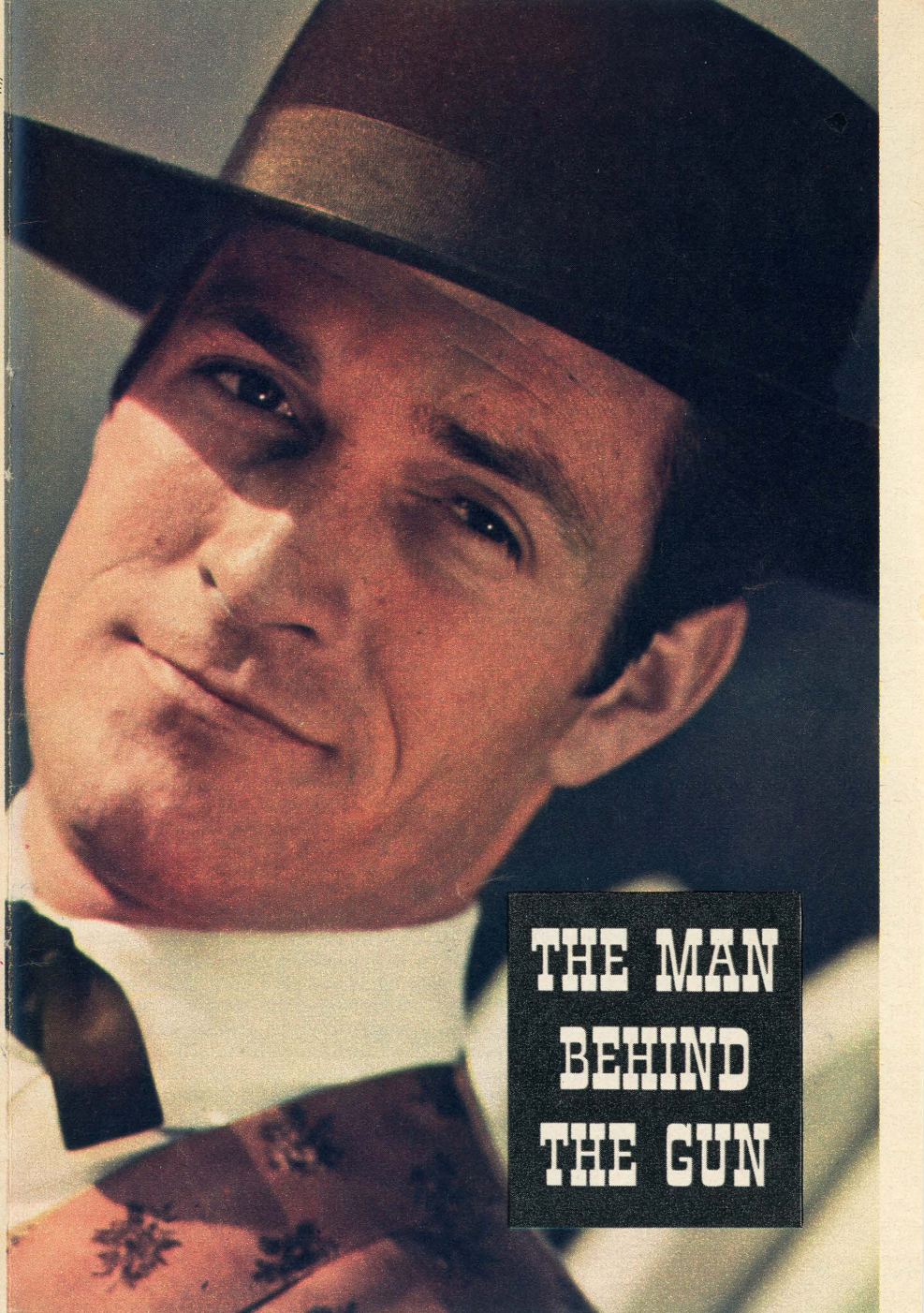
"So far as we are concerned, you are a cake of soap, we are your advertising agency and your sales department. If you have any other concept of yourself, we're not the right press agents for you."

Hugh O'Brian, a 33-year-old actor who came pretty much out of nowhere to become Wyatt Earp, is a man who has had four different independent press agents in the past few years, is now with his fifth and has also enjoyed the free services of both a studio and a network publicity department. From all this has emerged not so much a cake of soap as a solidly contrived semi-fictional character known as Wyatt Earp.

Out of it, too, comes a rather fascinating picture of a young man with a mission in life and no particular qualms as to how he accomplishes it. While the thumbnail sketches of O'Brian as presented frankly (and anonymously) by his present and former press agents range all the way from "I like him" through "very stimulating" to "unpolished," all agreed that (1) O'Brian is an eager beaver and (2) the "toughest man with a dollar bill in town."

Yet he is amazingly generous with his time—which is also money. One press agent has high praise for Hugh's genuine devotion to children. "There has been very little publicity—and Hugh insists that it be that way—about his visits to hospitals. For instance, he went up to Arizona recently on what was supposed to be a very brief appearance. Instead, he spent the whole day shaking hands with every kid he could find. How do you figure a guy like that?"

**continued**



**THE MAN  
BEHIND  
THE GUN**



Their hero: Hugh O'Brian followed by eager fans during Dodge City visit.

### Hugh O'Brian / continued

"O'Brian," says another, "works 24 hours a day at being a star. He is dedicated to it, feels that it's a responsibility. He has an innate publicity sense and is always full of ideas. He used to reach too much—there was nothing he wouldn't do to get a line in a column.

"He was quite insecure in those days. Used to be terribly nervous. I remember his nails were always bitten right down to nothing. But he was shrewd. When he got started on that fast-draw publicity, he very carefully qualified it. He knew there were a number of stuntmen and other old pros he couldn't outdraw, so he always referred to himself as the fastest-drawing star. And he's always said he couldn't hit a bull fiddle at 10 paces."

Says a third press agent: "O'Brian is one of the most astute businessmen I've ever known. He has talent as an actor, but he is trying to do too much. Take those guest appearances. He can't sing and he can't dance. He should confine himself to acting. He's a good, working actor. Frankly, I don't like him. He's polished around the edges just enough to get by with the social-climbing bit. He doesn't ring true to me. But he will emerge a great suc-

cess. He's just cold-blooded enough."

While most former press agents do like O'Brian, they agree he was troublesome as a client. "He's a nice guy personally. I wouldn't want to handle him again, however." And, "He drives you cuckoo."

Conversely, a woman press agent (married) finds him "one of the most attractive men I've ever met. Divine eyelashes. He's very stimulating, full of ideas, a great sense of humor."

Back to the male point of view: "He's very much like Mark Stevens—implacable, single-minded, driving.

"I don't think I ever saw him pick up a check. He used to have a place on the beach up at Malibu, you know. Gave a party up there one day for about 75 friends. When they started looking around for something to eat and drink, there just wasn't anything. O'Brian had expected everyone to bring his own liquor and food."

On another occasion, however, O'Brian borrowed a friend's house for an afternoon and gave a party for some 200 members of a local Hugh O'Brian Friend Club, a term he prefers to "fan club." He paid. He also gave up an entire afternoon and evening to the president of his Pittsburgh Friend Club recently.

One firm's representative points to O'Brian's innate decency with "I've known him to go way out of his way to help an unknown actor get in to see a producer. He remembers how tough it was for him to get started."

Says one of his earlier press agents, thoughtfully: "I always liked his regard for his parents. He's genuinely fond of them. He had a zest in those early days which I don't think he has now. I think he wears his success very well. He's realistic and on the level, or always has been with me."

Yet another sums it all up rather succinctly: "Say anything you like about him—to him, it's all publicity."