The representation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities on television is marked by a history of stereotypes and inexplicable invisibility. By the 1970s, gay media-watch groups communicated their concerns to the television industry and a sense of cooperation began to emerge between the LGBT community and broadcasters. During the 1980s, the AIDS crisis and resulting prejudices ushered in a new era of problematic and offensive portrayals. In the late 1990s, Ellen Degeneres' landmark coming out, (both in real-life, and through the character she portrayed in her sitcom), generated much controversy and discussion, ultimately paving the way for well-developed gay characters in prominent primetime TV roles. Despite such advances, stereotypes continue to resurface and perpetuate, and the full diversity of the LGBT community is more often than not underrepresented in the mass media.

This is only a partial list – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for additional titles, including relevant materials held in the Outfest Legacy Collection.

HEARST NEWSREEL

Hearst Newsreel Footage. Movie Stars Join Circus for Charity! Los Angeles, California (1948-09-04). Wrestling telecasts of the late 1940s and early 1950s often featured flamboyant characters with (implied) gay personas. Features Bob Hope acting as manager of outlandish TV wrestler Gorgeous George, who faces actor Burt Lancaster in a match. Study Copy: VA6581 M

Hearst Newsreel Footage. Wrestling from Montreal, Quebec, Canada (1948-10-22). Gorgeous George vs. Pete Petersen. Study Copy: VA8312 M

TELEVISION

(Please note some titles may require additional lead-time to make available for viewing)

1950s

Western Main Event Wrestling. (n.d.). Gorgeous George vs. Woody Strode. Study Copy: VA9714 T

Private Secretary. Suspicion. (1953-04-05) CBS. Producer, Jack Chertok. Cast, Ann Sothern, Don Porter, Ann Tyrrell. An effeminate male secretary gives up dreams of being an interior decorator because he is “too delicate” for the profession. The male secretary’s exaggerated fey mannerisms represent early television’s seemingly ubiquitous “sissy” stereotype, employed to mine a character’s implied gay orientation for humor. Study Copy: VA22322 T

Steve Allen Show (1957-03-24). NBC. With, Greer Garson, Groucho Marx, Dean Jones, Lou Costello. Louis Nye, playing a somewhat effeminate character in many of the shows skits, appears here in “Phone Skit” with Lou Costello and in ”Man on the Street.” Study Copy: VA20577 T

1960s


Bold Ones: The Lawyers. Shriek of Silence (1969-11-30). NBC. Producer, Roy Huggins. Cast, Joseph Campanella, James Farentino, Burl Ives. Forced to resign from his political staff position due to his sexual orientation, a gay man seeks revenge against his former employer, a gubernatorial candidate. Study Copy: VA22320 T

1970s

All in the Family. Judging Books by Covers (1971-02-09). CBS. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Carroll O’Connor, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner. Archie mistakenly insists that Mike and Gloria’s friend Roger is gay. Ironically, Archie instead discovers that it’s his tough beer-drinking buddy Steve who is gay. Study Copy: DVD521 T


Sanford and Son. Piano Movers (1972-04-07). NBC. Producers, Bud Yorkin, Norman Lear. Cast, Redd Foxx, Demond Wilson. Watts junkyard proprietor Fred Sanford suspects that the rich man whom has hired him to move a piano is gay. Study Copy: DVD963 T

An American Family (1973). PBS. Producer, Craig Gilbert. Directors, Alan Raymond, Susan Raymond. With, Patricia Loud, Bill Loud, Kevin Loud, Grant Loud, Lance Loud. In this early version of reality TV, producer Craig Gilbert documented over 300 hours in the life of a “typical” middle-class family and their openly gay eldest son. Study Copy: DVD4271 – DVD4276 T

Marcus Welby, M.D. The Other Martin Loring (1973-02-20). ABC. Producer, David Victor. Cast, Robert Young, James Brolin, Anne Baxter. In this episode, Dr. Welby describes his patient’s gay orientation as a grievous but treatable ailment, more worrisome than diabetes or alcoholism. Prior to broadcast, the script was leaked to gay activists leading to one of the Gay Liberation Movement’s first coordinated national campaigns. Study Copy: VA8518 T

Sanford and Son. Lamont, Is That You? (1973-10-19). NBC. Producers, Bud Yorkin, Norman Lear. Cast, Redd Foxx, Demond Wilson. Fred is concerned after his son is seen entering a gay bar. Study Copy: VA18171 T

This is the Life. The Secret (ca. 1974). Lutheran Church. Producer, Martin Neeb. Director, John Lucas. Writer, Lawrence Holben. Cast, John Alvin, Lyle Bettger, Bobby Kramer. A teacher at a boy’s school comes out. Inventory Number: T56051

The Streets of San Francisco. Mask of Death (1974-10-03). ABC. Producer, Quinn Martin. Cast, Karl Malden, Robert Wagner, Michael Douglas. A professional female impersonator’s intense identification with one of the women he mimics leads to murder. Inventory Number: T63210

Marcus Welby, M.D. The Outrage. (1974-10-08). ABC. Producer, David Victor. Cast, Robert Young, James Brolin, Elena Verdugo. A teacher is portrayed as a homosexual predator when accused by a student of molestation. Study Copy: VA8519 T

Maude. Maude’s New Friend (1974-12-02). CBS. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Beatrice Arthur, Bill Macy, Adrienne Barbeau. Barry Witherspoon has written a new book, which Maude is helping to promote in Tuckahoe society. Walter dislikes Barry immensely and Maude believes that Walter is insecure in his masculinity because Barry is gay. Study Copy: VA16626 T

Hot l Baltimore. George and Gordon (1975-02-21). ABC. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, James Cromwell, Richard Masur, Conchata Ferrell. In this short-lived series, a gay couple’s spat involves the guests and staff of a run-down, seedy hotel. Study Copy: VA9289 T

Harry-O. Coinage of the Realm (1975-07-24). ABC. Cast, David Janssen, Henry Darrow, Anthony Zerbe. In a departure from stereotype, the gay sexual orientation of a pair of professional killers is alluded to incidentally, not as a plot point. Inventory Number: T69394

All in the Family. Archie the Hero (1975-09-29). CBS. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Carroll O’Connor, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner. Archie is shocked when the tall, classy dame whose life he saved in a taxicab by administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation turns out to be a female impersonator. This episode introduced the transgender character “Beverly La Salle.” Study Copy: VA1677 T

All in the Family. Beverly Rides Again (1976-11-06). CBS. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Carroll O’Connor, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner. As a practical joke, Archie fixes up one of his drinking buddies with female impersonator Beverly La Salle. Study Copy: VA21380 T

Soap. Episode #2 (1977-09-20). ABC. Producer, Susan Harris. Cast, Katherine Helmond, Billy Crystal, Cathryn Damon. Main character, Jodie, plans to get a sex change operation. Study Copy: VA404 T


Soap. Episode #4 (1977-10-04). ABC. Producer, Susan Harris. Cast, Katherine Helmond, Billy Crystal, Cathryn Damon. Having learned that his quarterback boyfriend is dating a woman to protect his media image, Jodie tells of his plans to solve the problem by becoming a woman. Study Copy: VA6191 T
All in the Family. Cousin Liz (1977-10-09). CBS. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Carroll O’Connor, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner. Archie and Edith attend the funeral of Edith’s cousin whom Archie is shocked to learn was a lesbian. Study Copy: VA1691 T


All in the Family. Edith’s Crisis of Faith (1977-12-25). CBS. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Carroll O’Connor, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner. Edith’s religious faith is shaken after her friend, female impersonator Beverly LaSalle, is brutally murdered by street thugs at Christmas. Study Copy: VA20924 T

Starsky & Hutch. Death in a Different Place (1978-03-15). ABC. Producer, Aaron Spelling. Cast, Paul Glaser, David Soul, Bernie Hamilton. When a colleague and old friend is found dead, Dets. Starsky and Hutch are shocked to uncover that the man concealed his gay orientation and relationships. Inventory Number: T33425

WKRP in Cincinnati. Les on a Ledge (1978-10-02). CBS. Producer, Hugh Wilson. Cast, Gary Sandy, Gordon Jump, Loni Anderson. A reporter’s reputation, and ability to conduct locker room interviews, is on the line when a baseball player accuses him of being gay. Inventory Number: T75129

The Baxters. Homosexual Teachers (1979-10-31). TAT Communications. Producer, Norman Lear. Cast, Anita Gillette, Larry Keith, Derin Altay. First of a two-part program where the Baxters confront the issue of whether or not an admitted homosexual should be permitted to teach in public schools. Study Copy: VA16666 T

1980s


Brothers. Wedding (1984-07-13). Showtime. Producer, Greg Antonacci. Cast, Robert Walden, Tom Hinley, Philip MacKenzie. After running away from the altar and deciding not to go through with his wedding, the groom admits that he’s gay. Study Copy: VA22951 T

The Golden Girls. Isn’t it Romantic? (1986-11-08). NBC. Producer, Susan Harris. Cast, Bea Arthur, Betty White, Estelle Getty. Dorothy decides not to tell her housemates that her visiting friend is a lesbian. Study Copy: VA3203 T

21 Jump Street. Big Disease with a Little Name. (1988-02-07). Fox. Producer, Stephen Cannell. Cast, Holly Robinson, Steven Williams. An officer is assigned to protect a student with AIDS who is being made to feel unwelcome at school. Study Copy: VA6820 T
**Midnight Caller. After It Happened** (1988-12-13). NBC. Producer, Robert Singer. Cast, Gary Cole, Wendy Kilbourne, Dennis Dun, Kay Lenz. AIDS strikes close to Jack’s heart when his former lover (Lenz) tests positive for the disease after a one-night encounter with an infected man. This episode engendered much controversy and the producers, with the assistance of AIDS support groups in San Francisco, toned down the more offensive elements of the script. Study Copy: VA12011 T

**Dear John. Stand by Your Man** (1989-02-16). NBC. Producer, Ed Weinberger. Cast, Judd Hirsch, Jere Burns, Cleavon Little. A lonely new member of a therapy group confides that his marriage broke up because he is gay. Study Copy: VA16667 T

**Thirtysomething. Strangers** (1989-11-07). ABC. Producer, Marshall Herskovitz. Cast, Ken Olin, Mel Harris, Timothy Busfield. Age difference is the focus of this episode as it complicates both straight and gay relationships. Study Copy: VA6647 T

**1990s**

**Carol & Company. Reunion** (1990-04-07). NBC. Producer, Matt Williams. Cast, Carol Burnett, Swoozie Kurtz, Frank Bonner. Former high-school quarterback George Baker is nervous about attending his 30-year reunion – for George is now Georgette. Study Copy: VA10723 T

**Law & Order. Reaper’s Helper** (1990-10-04). NBC. Producer, Dick Wolf. Cast, George Dzundza, Chris Noth, Dann Florek. Lawyers are reluctant to prosecute a gay man for assisting AIDS sufferers in committing suicide. Study Copy: DVD1089 T


**Coach. Real Guy’s Guy** (1991-10-29). ABC. Producer, Barry Kemp. Cast, Craig Nelson, Jerry Van Dyke, Clare Carey. The football coach finds out that one of his players is gay and has a hard time treating him like “one of the guys.” Study Copy: VA19950 T

**Cheers. Rebecca and Lover – Not** (1992-04-23). NBC. Producer, Glen Charles. Cast, Ted Danson, Kirstie Alley, Harvey Fierstein. Rebecca looks forward to seeing her high school sweetheart, unaware that he has come out of the closet. Study Copy: VA16284 T

**Law & Order. Silence** (1992-04-28). NBC. Producer, Dick Wolf. Cast, George Dzundza, Chris Noth, Dann Florek. A politician opposes the prosecution of his son’s murderer because it might mean revealing that his late son was gay. Study Copy: DVD1096 T

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Law & Order. Manhood (1993-05-12). NBC. Producer, Dick Wolf. Cast, Jerry Orbach, Chris Noth, Dann Florek. It is believed that a gay cop is killed on duty because his fellow officers were reluctant to back him up. Study Copy: DVD1099 T


Frasier. Matchmaker (1994-10-04). NBC. Producer, David Lee. Cast, Kelsey Grammer, Jane Leeves, John Manhoney. Frasier sets up a date for a friend with the new station manager, Tom, unaware that Tom is gay and believes he’s actually going on a date with Frasier. Study Copy: VA18154 T

The Larry Sanders Show. I was a Teenage Lesbian (1995-10-11). HBO. Producer, Brad Grey. Cast, Garry Shandling, Jeffrey Tambor, Janeane Garofalo. Confessions of lesbian encounters is the topic of this episode. Inventory Number: T67819

The Single Guy. Neighbors (1995-11-02). NBC. Producer, Brad Hall. Cast, Jonathan Silverman, Jessica Hecht, Mark Moses. Two straight friends suspect the other is gay. Meanwhile, others assume the two are romantically linked, including a gay neighborhood couple. Study Copy: VA14092 T


The Larry Sanders Show. Ellen, or Isn’t She? (1996-12-11). HBO. Producer, Brad Grey. Cast, Garry Shandling, Jeffrey Tambor, Ellen DeGeneres. Larry tries to get Ellen DeGeneres to “come out” on the air. Study Copy: VA16165 T

The Simpsons. Homer’s Phobia (1997-02-16). Fox. Producer, Matt Groening. Cast, Dan Castellaneta, Nancy Cartwright, Julie Kavner. Homer thinks his new friend John (John Waters) is great, but when Marge tells him John is gay, homophobic Homer decides that he hates him. Inventory Number: T71435


Ally McBeal. Boy to the World (1997-12-01). Fox. Producer, David Kelley. Cast, Calista Flockhart, Courtney Throne-Smith, Greg Germann. Ally is asked to take on a pro-bono case that involves a young transvestite prostitute. Inventory Number: T75971

Beverly Hills 90210. Nature of Nurture (1998-03-18). Fox. Producer, Aaron Spelling. Cast, Jennie Garth, Luke Perry, Tori Spelling. After a young woman puts her baby up for adoption, she decides that she wants her son back when she learns a gay couple has been granted custody. Study Copy: VA22532 T

Will & Grace. Pilot Episode (1998-09-21). NBC. Producer, David Kohan. Cast, Eric McCormack, Debra Messing, Sean Hayes. Ellen paved the way for this sitcom about the longtime friendship between a well-adjusted gay attorney, a straight female interior designer and a stereotypically effeminate entertainment wannabe. Study Copy: VA15517 T

Trinity. Pilot Episode (1998-10-16). NBC. Producer, Matthew Carnahan. Cast, Tate Donovan, Charlotte Ross, Justin Louis. A parishioner seeks advice on how to tell his wife and his daughter that he’s seeing another man. Inventory Number: T73027


Felicity. Love and Marriage (1999-02-23). WB. Producer, J.J. Abrams. Cast, Keri Russell, Scott Speedman, Amy Jo Johnson. A visiting family member announces that he is gay and before anyone can come to grips with this news, he introduces his boyfriend, whom he plans to marry. Study Copy: DVD915 T

M.Y.O.B. Boys in the Band (1999-06-13). NBC. Producer, Gary David Goldberg. Cast, Katherine Towne, Lauren Graham, Paul Fitzgerald. A teacher is accused of having an affair with a student. In order to save the teacher’s job, the student is coerced into coming out of the closet. Inventory Number: T79090

The West Wing. In Excelsis Deo (1999-12-15). NBC. Producer, Aaron Sorkin. Cast, Martin Sheen, Rob Lowe, John Spencer. When a gay high school senior is beaten to death by a group of 13-year-olds, it seems no one is interested in revisiting the hate crimes issue. Study Copy: DVD969 T

2000s


Sex and the City. All That Glitters (2002-01-13). HBO. Producer, Alexa Junge. Cast, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis. Co-workers reveal secrets about each other and in the process a closeted gay officemate is outed. Study Copy: DVD1061 T

Sex and the City. I Love a Charade (2002-09-08). HBO. Producer, Alexa Junge. Cast, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis. A friend who is presumed gay is finally getting married — to a woman. Study Copy: DVD1063 T


Freshman Diaries. Brave New World (2003-08-31). Showtime. Producer, R.J. Cutler. First in an unscripted series chronicling the lives of a group of freshman attending the University of Texas at Austin. As the freshmen move into their new college world, a gay student questions his sexuality. Study Copy: VA20642 T

Law & Order – Special Victims Unit. Abomination (2003-11-11). NBC. Producer, Dick Wolf. Cast, Christopher Meloni, Mariska Hargitay, Richard Belzer. A gay youth is murdered after he is featured on posters for an organization that claims it can make gays straight. Study Copy: DVD1113 T

Law & Order. Married with Children (2004-02-04). NBC. Producer, Dick Wolf. Cast, Jerry Orbach, Sam Waterston, Jesse Martin. The death of a woman leads to a case involving a lesbian couple and a state law banning gay adoption. Study Copy: DVD888 T

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The list of titles above was compiled with the assistance of the following reference works: THE PRIME TIME CLOSET: A HISTORY OF GAYS AND LESBIANS ON TV (2002) by Stephen Tropiano and Steven Capsuto’s ALTERNATE CHANNELS: THE UNCENSORED STORY OF GAY AND LESBIAN IMAGES ON RADIO AND TELEVISION (2000).

PRINT RESOURCES
(for more information consult the UCLA Libraries Collection)


OUTFEST LEGACY COLLECTION AT UCLA

In addition to the titles listed in this collection profile, the Archive holds the Outfest Legacy Collection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) which includes over 3,000 Outfest Film Festival entries, released studio films, works-in-progress, television programs, public service announcements, commercials, music videos and electronic press kits available for research access.

For additional information related to material in this collection or to arrange onsite viewing at UCLA, please contact the Archive Research and Study Center (ARSC) at 310-206-5388, or via email: arsc@ucla.edu

For more information regarding the Legacy Project, please visit Outfest’s website: http://www.outfest.org/