

TELEVISION

Down to The Wire

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE of HBO, it's hard to imagine there could be a downside to the endless stream of praise the cable network has received for its fabulous slate of original series. But once all of us in the media were done sucking up to "The Sopranos" and "Six Feet Under" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and "Sex and the

radar during its spectacular first season last year. Worse, if you tried to join the show a few episodes late, "The Wire's" chief virtue—its microscopic focus on a single, sprawling case—became its biggest obstacle. You were lost. Now's your chance to get onboard. The second season of "The Wire," which shifts focus from Baltimore's projects to the city's struggling (and smuggling) blue-collar dockworkers, began on Sunday night, meaning you've got all week to catch a rebroadcast or join the show before it gets too deep into a new case. If you're already a fan of the show, you'll love how Simon's writers spend four weeks cleverly reuniting last season's team of disgraced detectives. (NBC would've had 'em back together by the first commercial break.) If

neat and tidy McMysteries are your bag, there'll be around-the-clock repeats of "Law & order" this summer. But if you're looking for new episodes of the best cop show on television, well, we won't say it. Enough is enough, right?

—DEVIN GORDON



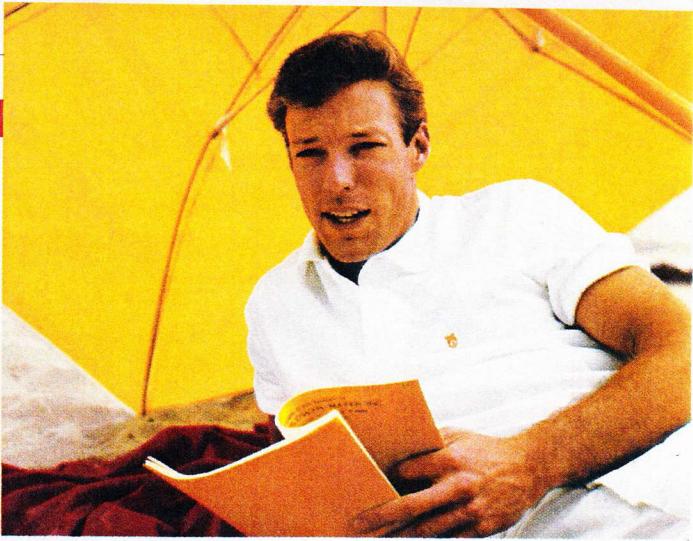
BACK ON THE JOB: Sonja Sohn as Detective Greggs

City," no one could stomach the idea of swooning over yet another HBO program—no matter how good it was. Enough was enough. Which might explain why "The Wire," creator David Simon's meticulously authentic cops-and-gangbangers saga set in Baltimore, flew under the

radar during its spectacular first season last year. Worse, if you tried to join the show a few episodes late, "The Wire's" chief virtue—its microscopic focus on a single, sprawling case—became its biggest obstacle. You were lost. Now's your chance to get onboard. The second season of "The Wire," which shifts focus from Baltimore's projects to the city's struggling (and smuggling) blue-collar dockworkers, began on Sunday night, meaning you've got all week to catch a rebroadcast or join the show before it gets too deep into a new case. If you're already a fan of the show, you'll love how Simon's writers spend four weeks cleverly reuniting last season's team of disgraced detectives. (NBC would've had 'em back together by the first commercial break.) If

neat and tidy McMysteries are your bag, there'll be around-the-clock repeats of "Law & order" this summer. But if you're looking for new episodes of the best cop show on television, well, we won't say it. Enough is enough, right?

—DEVIN GORDON



OUT AND ABOUT: Richard Chamberlain, studying a script on the beach

FAST CHAT

A Life in the Closet

SORRY, MOM. YOUR favorite leading man was leading a double life. "Dr. Kildare's" Richard Chamberlain—who comes out in a new memoir titled "Shattered Love"—discusses his decades of deception with NEWSWEEK's B. J. Sigesmund.

Was it hard to lie for so long?

No, I accepted it as an absolute necessity. I made a vow with myself to be as secretive about these matters as possible. I was young, and that was my life.

Did studios set you up with female dates for premières?

I always had great girlfriends, and if I went to a public event, I'd take one of them. That just seemed totally natural, a part of the show. But if I hadn't taken

care of that myself, the studio probably would have entered into it. The publicity department at MGM was very savvy. **You were very careful not to slip up with press interviews.**

The fan magazines were especially aggressive, in a covert way. They'd ask questions like, "Why aren't you married?" or "Do you want children?" I'd answer evasively, like, "Getting married would be great, but I'm awfully busy now."

The tabloids outed you in 1990.

To see headlines on something as unimportant as whether I'm gay or not ... it played into terrible fears of mine.

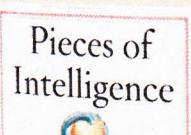
Do you have copies of those articles in scrapbooks at home? No. I wish I did, but I don't.

BOOKS Donald Rumsfeld's Poetic License

Truth may be beauty, but evading the truth can be downright poetic. In a June 2002 interview with *The Washington Times*, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said, "The truth is, look:/If something is going to happen,/ There has to be something/For it to happen with/ That's interested in having it happen." Rumsfeld's verse, long embedded in news briefings, interviews and the U.S. Defense Department Web site, has now been collected in one volume, "Pieces of Intelligence: The Existential Poetry of Donald H. Rumsfeld," compiled and edited by Hart Seely. Not everyone's words can be converted to verse by pressing the return key in weird places and capitalizing in the middle of sentences. Seely, a re-

porter for the Syracuse Post-Standard, first tried to fit Ari Fleischer's words into stanzas, but the press secretary's words proved too controlled for art. When Seely started reading Rumsfeld transcripts, he discovered real talent. "This guy wasn't saying anything about anything!" With colorful tangents and a tendency to repeat himself in a majestic way—"Like a chorus in a bad song," says Seely—Rumsfeld's words were already lyrical. Like modern African-American street poetry, Rumsfeld's riffs originated as oral improvisation, Seely writes in his introduction. In

"The Unknown," Rumsfeld's thoughts are particularly deep: "As we know,/There are known knowns./There are things we know we know./We also know/



The Existential Poetry of Donald H. Rumsfeld
COMPILED AND EDITED BY HART SEELY
Introduction by Hart Seely
Foreword by Donald H. Rumsfeld

That is to say/We know there are some things/We do not know./ But there are also unknown unknowns,/The ones we don't know we don't know." Says Seely, "The unknown unknown is a brilliant concept. I wish he'd take it one step further and go unknown unknown unknown."

—SUSANNAH MEADOWS