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## Some Coffee and Sandwiches?

Before anyone, in the interest of promoting science on TV, proposes a new dramatic series about an idealistic young scientist who picks up pointers from a distinguished older colleague, in the manner of Dr. Kildare learning the business from Dr. Gillespie, we have a suggestion of our own to offer. At present, the occasional science program usually consists of something between an illustrated lecture and a documentary. The program, using film clips from laboratories and field stations, seeks to describe man's achievements in some part of science, including the latest "breakthroughs." What is needed is more imagination in presenting science, but not too much more.

One objective in putting science on TV is to tell the general public some of the things that scientists have found out, and the lecture or documentary is well suited to this purpose. A second objective is to convey something of what might be called the life of science, and the lecture or documentary, if done well, can also accomplish something with this goal. Our suggestion is for an alternate, and we think better, way of achieving this second objective. The suggestion is to get a few scientists to sit around a table, drink coffee, eat sandwiches, and talk about what they do. The discussions could be as lively as some of those seen on David Susskind's "Open End."

Of course, not every topic discussed on "Open End" is precisely illustrative of what we have in mind. But if that program has explored what Frank Sinatra is really like, it has also examined the pros and cons of the government's fallout shelter program. Discussion of science by scientists, and perhaps others, could serve to disprove some of the popular views about scientists—or to confirm them. No special knowledge would be required to understand the discussion, and yet the discussion might well interest not only the general public, but also other scientists.

To illustrate, here are some questions that the David Susskind of the show might ask:

- We have two conflicting pictures of the scientist. He is supposed to be unfeeling, disinterested, a careful observer of phenomena. He is also supposed to be passionately devoted to proving hypotheses, usually his own. Which picture is correct? Or, are all scientists suffering from split personalities?

- When in a patriotic mood we sometimes claim that democracy is the best soil for science. Yet, science, or at least a good portion of it, is thriving in the Soviet Union. Is there really any connection between political freedom and scientific freedom?

- On matters such as hazards of radioactive fallout or effects of cholesterol in milk, scientists sometimes disagree. If science deals with objective facts, how is this possible? What should laymen do when the experts disagree?

- What does a scientist do when he enters the laboratory? How does he make a discovery? We know he does such things as read dials, but we all read dials—our clocks and scales, the speedometers on our cars. What is different about what a scientist does?

- There is very little fraud in science. Scientists seldom fake experiments. The claim is made, consequently, that scientists are more moral than other people. Is this really so? Or, since other scientists are on hand to repeat new experiments, is it just that cheating is patently foolish?—J.T.