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The Fake News: Examining the Image of the Journalist Through Weekend Update (Part I: 1975-1980)

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By Lawrence Murray

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ABSTRACT

The image of the broadcast news journalist is one that we can identify with on a regular basis. We see the news as an opportunity to be engaged in the world at large. *Saturday Night Live's* "Weekend Update" brought a different take on the image of the journalist: one that was a satire on its head, but a criticism of news culture as a whole. This article looks at the first five seasons of *Saturday Night Live's* "Weekend Update" and the image of the journalist portrayed by the *SNL* cast members serving as cast members from 1975 (Chevy Chase) until 1980 (Bill Murray and Jane Curtin). This article will show how the anchors' style and substance does more than tell jokes about the news. The image of the journalist portrayed through the 1970s version of "Weekend Update" is mostly a negative one; while it acknowledges the importance of news and information by being a staple of the show, it ultimately mocks the news and the journalists who are prominently featured on the news.

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INTRODUCTION: WEEKEND UPDATE

Saturday Night Live is a sketch comedy show that debuted on NBC in 1975. The show has been a fixture on the network since then, and is the longest running sketch comedy show on American television. The show airs live on Saturday night for around 20 episodes a season, featuring an ensemble cast, a host, and a musical guest. The middle of the show features a sketch called “Weekend Update”.

Weekend Update is a parody newscast that featured a recurring anchor (usually a cast member) making punch lines out of the news and multiple correspondents that either were impersonating newsmakers or giving the anchors a hard time.

This article will examine the image of the journalist through the first five seasons of the history of *Saturday Night Live*. This period of time includes the anchor tenures of Chevy Chase, Jane Curtin, Dan Aykroyd, and Bill Murray. This paper will look at how well each anchor effectively played the role of a journalist as well as fulfilling their roles as entertainers.

The first episode of *Saturday Night Live* featured George Carlin as host. However, it was clear that the star of the cast was going to be Chevy Chase. He got to say “Live from New York” on the first show, and as the original Weekend Update anchor, he got to put his name out there. However, it wasn’t until his fifth show that **Chevy Chase** would break out his defining line “I’m Chevy Chase, and you’re not.” Chase’s popularity actually shortened his run on the show. Originally hired as a writer,

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Chase became a breakout star, earning himself rumors that he would be Johnny Carson's heir apparent on *The Tonight Show* and eventually leaving the Weekend Update desk shortly before the 1976 Presidential Election.

Jane Curtin, another original cast member, took over for Chase in 1976. While Chase fit the image of a clumsy, underprepared, yet sharp male broadcast journalist, Curtin was more of a straight journalist who carried out her assignments with responsibility and objectivity. Curtin would handle Weekend Update duties until the entire original cast left in 1980, but she would only be the solo anchor for the remainder of the 1976-1977 season.

Dan Aykroyd would serve as Curtin's co-anchor during the 1977-1978 season, marking the first time *SNL* would commit to two co-anchors. Aykroyd was like the conservative journalist that we see now on Fox News, and this can be best seen through his "Point/Counterpoint" interactions with Curtin. "Point/Counterpoint" was a *60 Minutes* segment featuring Shana Alexander and James Kirkpatrick. Curtin would call Aykroyd "a pompous ass", while Aykroyd would declare Curtin "an ignorant slut" on the issues at hand. While this team only lasted for one season, it gave "Weekend Update" an opportunity to play up the dynamic of having a male and female news team.

Bill Murray would replace Aykroyd and team up with Curtin from 1978 to 1980. Murray wouldn't present the clumsy qualities of Chase nor would he be like Aykroyd in terms of his philosophical conflicts with Curtin. Murray and Curtin together were more like a traditional news team, sharing the Weekend Update desk but more or less

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interacting independently to deliver the news. Murray was a former correspondent for Curtin and Aykroyd's newscast, often commenting on entertainment factors. This would allow him to bring the ranting energy of one who covers popular culture events.

Over the course of the 1970s, a recurring cast of correspondents would join all the anchors, as news also had the auxiliary role of providing editorials and reports away from the central desk. Cast members such as Laraine Newman, Gilda Radner, Garrett Morris, and John Belushi were never anchors, but they all had somewhat memorable roles providing their twisted version of journalistic accounts.

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LITERATURE REVIEW:

This section will briefly preview what others have written on the subject of “Weekend Update” and the idea of journalism and satire.

In Geoffrey Baym’s “The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism”, Baym mentions that “Weekend Update” is a feature of *Saturday Night Live* where “Conventional news, as well as comedy like Jay Leno or Weekend Update, emphasizes a “now this” format in which each story is given very little timeⁱ. For the comedy shows, each topic serves only as the premise for a quick punch line, while for network news broadcasts brevity is an ostensible necessity as it allows the inclusion of more topics; but in either case, it is rare for any topic to be dealt with in detail.

In order to get a feel for *Saturday Night Live*, it is important to emphasize the importance of other shows’ impact on *SNL* and “Weekend Update”. Shows on American television that featured ridiculous parodies of the news before “Weekend Update” includes *Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In*; the news parody format would be pioneered by shows like BBC’s *That Was The Week That Was* (Herb Sargent, an original *SNL* writer, was credited as a writer for *That Was The Week That Was*). Sargent and original cast member Chevy Chase are credited for creating “Weekend Update”:

"Herb would work closely with Chevy," Lorne Michaels, the show's executive producer, said in an interview. "He would make sure all the major news stories of the week were covered. Plus just silly things."ⁱⁱ

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Michaels was an important influence on “Weekend Update”, since he got his start in television in Canada in the 1960s – a time where informational programming was reaching prominence.ⁱⁱⁱ According to Reinheld, “Weekend Update” expanded the parameters of what is allowable on network television, and those putting together “Weekend Update” had to pay close attention to the traditional news media, resulting in the *Saturday Night Live* offices resembling a real media newsroom.^{iv}

In 2008, Emily Nerland wrote her image of the journalist in popular culture on *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*. The interesting thing about *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* is that it stars Will Ferrell in the title role. Ferrell was actually a *Saturday Night Live* cast member from 1995 until 2002, and though he was never a “Weekend Update” anchor, he did appear on the segment several times. Nerland’s paper, “The Image of the Local Television News Anchor in *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*” concluded that, “The film contributes to the know-nothing, self-loving anchor image” and that “The image is damaging to an already tarnished image of the local news anchor.”^v

The effectiveness of this negative image, however, is not to be ignored, as “Weekend Update” has served as a way to both crossover political satire with the development of the *Saturday Night Live* program itself.^{vi} Caryn Murphy wrote in her essay on “the Tina Fey era” that “The [“Weekend Update”] anchor post enhances performers’ visibility because they use their own names and do not overtly appear to be in character; the weekly segment is a vital part of the show’s appeal for much of the

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viewing audience.”^{vii} Fey did not become an anchor until 2000, showing how an establishment set in 1975 endured into the 21st century.

In his article on “comic culture,” David Gurney wrote about how one of the original catchphrases in “Weekend Update” and *Saturday Night Live* history, “Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead,” is a commentary on journalism culture: “As a parody of the repetitious coverage of the dictator’s impending death, the line continues to be used as a shorthand jab at the predictable cycles of coverage that often follow news stories long after they have been sufficiently reported.”^{viii} This again speaks to the thought that “Weekend Update” both highlights and aggregates information shared by news outlets, but does so in a way that deems them surplus to demands.

Perhaps the standard for evaluating the image of the news anchor in popular culture comes from Ron Powers’ article “Eyewitless News,” published in the same era as the first seasons of *Saturday Night Live*. A critic of the “Eyewitness News” format developed by news executive Al Primo in the 1960s, Powers lamented that local television news had taken over newspapers as a primary news source. He singled out a Chicago-area *Eyewitness News* newscast: “In every important area, on this night as on most nights, the WLS *Eyewitness News* team had followed a meticulous and familiar blueprint for audience-building, in which journalism played a secondary role at best.”^{ix} Powers outlined five things that 1970s newscasts were becoming infamous for: a) high story count, b) the use of “visuals”, or file footage, c) a “team atmosphere”, d) Use of an “action” reporter to create a feeling of the station’s “involvement” in the community, and

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e) simple, easy to understand stories. Powers asserted that, “In all, the April 7, 1976, early-evening newscast on WLS-TV was distinguished less by what it *told* viewers than by what it *appeared* to tell them.”^x

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METHODOLOGY

I've watched just about every "Weekend Update" possible. *Saturday Night Live* has only had a handful of shows in which the recurring sketch did *not* make it on air. Since 1986, no *Saturday Night Live* has ever excluded "Weekend Update". I am a fan of the show, but I am also a critic of the show and its consistency and effectiveness.

Based on what others have written, here's what I read and here's what I looked for:

It is important to separate "Weekend Update" from *Saturday Night Live*. There are examples of political, news, and media satire in *Saturday Night Live* that take place outside of the construct of "Weekend Update." This does not look at every mock talk show or every impersonation of a journalist from the show (i.e., "Tomorrow", a parody of Tom Snyder's show featuring Dan Aykroyd). Only the ten minutes of the "Weekend Update" segment.

I narrowed the topic of the paper from all 39 seasons to simply the first five seasons because that is a more feasible study. Even though the show has remained on the air since 1975, the cast has undergone several major and minor transitions.

Saturday Night Live has changed executive producers three times since 1980, though the original executive producer, Lorne Michaels, has remained in place since 1985.

Saturday Night Live in its fifth decade now – it has gone from a counterculture show in a time before cable to a multimedia platform that utilizes and embraces social media and YouTube.

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My process for this article started with watching and charting every episode of *Saturday Night Live* from October 1975 until the last show of the original cast in May 1980. I started with a Netflix account, and then transitioned to an Amazon Prime account. I also published an interview I conducted with Stephen Tropiano, who wrote *Saturday Night Live FAQ: Everything Left to Know About Television's Longest-Running Comedy*. I also reached out to Howard Rosenberg, a former television critic at the *Los Angeles Times*.

Two of the top books on *Saturday Night Live* served as added perspective through this process. Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller's *Live From New York: An Uncensored History of Saturday Night Live* was released in 2002, and it served as an oral history of the show. In 1986, Doug Hill and Jeff Weingrad released *Saturday Night: A Backstage History of Saturday Night Live*.

The combination of my viewing and research experiences are conveyed in my overall image here. Inspired by Powers' thoughts on the number of stories covered per news segment, I took that number down for every "Weekend Update" segment – those numbers are available in the appendix. I also looked for defining moments in each broadcast, whether it was a moment of relatively strong journalism, or a moment of outrageous silliness coming from an anchor or correspondent.

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CHEVY CHASE

Chevy Chase was the first Weekend Update anchor on *Saturday Night Live*. He made his debut in 1975. Chase opened his newscast with “I’m Chevy Chase, and you’re not,” a line that “quickly became Chevy’s signature line.”^{xi}

Chase on his role in “Weekend Update”: “The genesis at *Saturday Night* was when Lorne ha everybody do their screen tests, which seemed kind of ridiculous because he had already been going through a month or two of choosing who would be the Not Ready for Prime Time Players. At the end of the screen test, which was in a studio right there at NBC, which was really just a kind of a news desk with lighting, [Michaels] said, ‘Why don’t you get up and do something, Chev?’ I had written this short thing about one of those things that I hated about the news back then. They’d always end with a story and this: ‘[fake chuckles] Well, that’s the news.’ So [the story] was about a baby bird born at the zoo, but it took a twist, which was that the baby hippo that had been born a couple of days earlier unfortunately stepped on the bird and crushed it – and, of course, [the story] ended with ‘[fake chuckles] And now, Kate, back to you.’”^{xii}

Chase’s description speaks directly to the negative image of the journalist in the 1970s – the very journalists that he would go on to parody as the first breakout star of *Saturday Night Live*:

“The thought behind it, thematically, was, ‘Here’s an opportunity to do parody, to be funny as a newsmen, and to have a phone – which they all seemed to have at the time – and use that as a vehicle for satire to say damn well what I want on the news,” Chase said.^{xiii}

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Chase was *Saturday Night Live's* "Weekend Update" anchor for 28 of the show's first 30 episodes – all of season one, and four of the first six shows in the second season, 1976-1977. He would "cover" 350 stories in those 28 episodes: an average of 12.5 per segment. Interestingly, Chase started slow, as he never had more than nine stories until after he established his "I'm Chevy Chase and you're not" catchphrase on November 8, 1975.^{xiv} After that, Chase never fell below ten stories per show.

Chase's role as anchor eventually developed a formula. Announcer Don Pardo would open the segment straight ("And now, Weekend Update with Chevy Chase"), but Chase would always be on the phone, presumably with a woman, unaware that his microphone was live and that he was being broadcast: "What do you mean? No -you remember on the freeway... that truck that passed us? I swear they could see your head. Honey, it did *not* look like you were napping... [notices the camera] I gotta go! [hangs up] Good evening! I'm Chevy Chase, and you're not."^{xv} Chase would do this all the time, and get away with it, as explained by Hill and Weingrad: "... Some of the jokes on *Saturday Night* were sophisticated in such a way that if you were going to be offended by them, you probably were not going to understand them, and therefore you wouldn't be offended ... it's doubtful straitlaced viewers realized (Chase) was talking about oral sex on wheels."^{xvi} Chase would then go into his routine of jokes, which masqueraded as news stories: "The Post Office announced today that it is going to issue a stamp commemorating prostitution in the United States. It's a ten-cent stamp, but if you want to lick it, it's a quarter."^{xvii} Chase had several shows where he would give an editorial report on an incident, turning it over to a reporter of another name only to do

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the report (typically an artist's rendition of a day in court) as himself, only in a different voice. He would also bring correspondents such as Jane Curtin on to do what seemed to be serious editorials, but would clown them by doing funny faces behind their back, never appearing to get caught in the act. This would, set the stage for his successor, Curtin, to fight an uphill battle. But for Chase, his popularity was a huge boost for the show. His segment would usually end with Garrett Morris repeating the top story of the night "for the hard of hearing" – this bit would appear on seven of Chase's 28 episodes as a cast member on the show.

Chase acknowledged that he wasn't trying to be the type of news anchor that he saw in the 1970s, and his style was definitely not a homage to those that did the news in that time. Even his catchphrase was a shot at the self-importance of broadcast journalism: "There was a guy named Roger Grimsby in New York. He used to say, 'Good evening, I'm Roger Grimsby, and here now the news.' And I never liked that use of that conjunction or the entire phrase afterward. 'Here now the news' – what the hell is that? Pretentious junk. Nothing against Roger Grimsby, but the use of it is sort of odd: 'Hi, I'm Roger Elgin, and the weather's nice, isn't it?' There was a pretension I didn't like. So I at some point – I usually winged these things – I went, 'I'm Chevy Chase and you're not.' I mean, I had nothing else to say."^{xviii}

Chase did have a significantly serious moment as a "Weekend Update" anchor, and it showed up for his last show as a cast member on October 30, 1976. This show was aired the day before the 1976 Presidential Election between incumbent Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. Chase, who had done the Gerald Ford impression thirteen

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times as a cast member on the show, claimed that Weekend Update had obtained two separate, hard-hitting commercials that out of goodwill would not be seen – one from the Ford campaign, and one from the Carter campaign: “In the past, Weekend Update has maintained a professional objectivity about major events of the world, never taking sides, always endeavoring to present all perspectives on all the issues regardless of personal feelings. For this reason, in keeping with our policy of fairness, we will not endorse either of the candidates for the presidency.”^{xix}

Of course, keeping up with his established persona on “Weekend Update”, Chase showed them both. The Ford campaign commercial was a silly take on Jimmy Carter’s “lustful thoughts”, with Dan Aykroyd doing his Jimmy Carter voiceover. But the Carter campaign commercial that followed was simply a video of Ford pardoning Nixon, with b-roll of Ford and Nixon together, concluding with “Four More Years – Vote for Carter.” Chase would exit the show after that episode and Carter would be elected President.

Overall, Chase would seem to serve as a negative image of the journalist as a “Weekend Update” anchor. He uses his platform to entertain with crude, yet subtle humor, and while his comedy isn’t inherently mean-spirited, it is a direct reflection of how Chase views the value of broadcast journalism. As Stephen Tropicano observed, Chase “delivered the news like a handsome frat boy who didn’t take his job very seriously.”^{xx}

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JANE CURTIN

Curtin took over for Chevy Chase when Chase missed two shows early in season two. Her first show as anchor came on September 25, 1976, and she opened the “Weekend Update” segment much like Chase would have – on the phone confused about what a golden shower was before recognizing that she was in the air.^{xxi} Curtin handled ten stories with Laraine Newman as a correspondent on that first show, and Curtin followed up with eleven the following week while featuring Garrett Morris and John Curtin as correspondents the following week.^{xxii}

Curtin appeared as a correspondent only three times in season one, and always in a straight role that allowed Chase to do funny faces while she attempted to give a serious report. She would serve in this correspondent role next to Chase during both of his last two shows, and then the anchor desk was all to Curtin for the remainder of the second season. Curtin tried to give the appearance of being a serious anchor, especially in comparison to Chase. Chase acknowledged this when he returned from hiatus in October, referring to Curtin as “a very fine journalist in her own right” while downplaying the role of women serving as a newscaster. Chase then went on to do his silly face routine while Curtin attempted to do a report on fluorocarbon.^{xxiii}

The fact that Curtin was a woman was a major theme while she tried to get through the rest of the 1976-1977 season. On the December 11, 1976 episode hosted by Candice Bergen, Curtin invited Gilda Radner’s Emily Litella to “Weekend Update”. Now, Litella had already made eleven appearances on “Weekend Update”, all with Chase as anchor. Emily Litella gave editorial replies, and she would always have the

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same kinds of errors, going on rants due to one word (i.e., violence in school) until Chase corrected her at the end of her rant (i.e., violins, not violence), to which Litella could only say “Never mind!”^{xxiv} In the Bergen episode, Litella acknowledged that she hadn’t been on since Curtin took over as “Weekend Update” anchor. Curtin, annoyed at Litella mixing up “UNICEF” with “unisex”, let Litella know that she could be on as often as she liked as long as she came up with something “funnier than unisex”. Litella replied that she would – but then called Curtin a “bitch” under her breath as she smiled to the camera. The response got a roar from the audience, as a sullen Curtin ended the newscast staring a hole through Emily Litella.^{xxv} Alan Zweibel, a writer on the show who wrote this particular part of “Weekend Update”, would explain the groundbreaking nature of this particular episode: “Now this is 1977 (actually, 1976), okay? We do it in the dress rehearsal and the place goes nuts because ‘bitch’ on television was groundbreaking.”^{xxvi} As Zweibel explained it, this served more of a purpose to do something different with the Emily Litella character while also beginning to phase it out.

Curtin would respond to her role as a female journalist serving as an anchor on “Weekend Update” at the end of the following January, opening the segment with this diatribe:

“Before I begin my regular news broadcast tonight, I'd like to read you a letter. ‘Dear Jane Curtin: I certainly miss Chevy; he is real sexy. You can't hold a candle to him. Would you please send me his photograph? Yours sincerely, Margie Kaufman.’ I've been getting letters about News Update lately with phrases like ‘Going Downhill’, ‘Not What It Used To Be’, and ‘Just Plain Boring.’ Mostly the letters are about how Update

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isn't as good as when that 'sexy Chevy Chase' did it. The network says the ratings are slipping, and they're putting a lot of pressure on Lorne to try somebody new, like that new kid (Bill) Murray, or whatever his name is. You see, I just *assumed* it was responsible journalism you wanted, not sex. I gave you more credit than that. But I was wrong. What can I say, besides... "Try THESE on for size, Connie Chung!"

Curtin then ripped open her blouse, exposing her bra-covered breasts. "If it's raw news you want, it's raw news you get!" Curtin exclaimed.^{xxvii}

Embarrassing as it was for Curtin, this would seem to mark a turning point for Curtin; the reality had been that she was overwhelmed with the pressure of following up *Saturday Night Live's* first breakout star (and first departed star) under the spotlight of "Weekend Update". Unlike Chase, Curtin did not write for herself, and she was "bitterly upset about some of the material she was given, which for a while relied heavily on sexual innuendo."^{xxviii} However, the response to her on-air "stunt" "lent her work more spark than she was generally given credit for."^{xxix}

Curtin would remain on "Weekend Update" until the departure of the entire cast in May 1980. However, she would only serve as a solitary anchor until May of 1977. Overall, Curtin would serve as a more neutral than negative image of the journalist. Compared to Chase, Curtin directly addressed journalism integrity on multiple occasions and actually tried to play up to a certain role. However, while she got to serve as a female anchor on the program, she also was still a comedienne in her role, though she didn't have any of the aloofness of Chase.

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DAN AYKROYD (w/ JANE CURTIN)

Like Curtin, Aykroyd seldom appeared on “Weekend Update” prior to becoming a co-anchor in 1977. He made only six appearances on “Weekend Update” during the first two seasons of the show, fewer than any original cast member on the show and only one more than Bill Murray, who joined the show in January 1977.

Unlike Curtin, Aykroyd didn’t embrace his role on “Weekend Update”, lasting for only the 1977-1978 season: “I did ‘Update’ for one season, I think, and I wasn’t comfortable in it. I didn’t like it. They only gave it to me because Chevy had gone. ‘Jane, you ignorant slut’ really caught on – that was great – but delivering the jokes and being the newsreader was not something that I was comfortable with. I was very happy to be relieved of that.”^{xxx}

The addition of Aykroyd to “Weekend Update” did allow for *Saturday Night Live* to further emulate the *Eyewitness News* format that Powers discussed in his article, and that was clear from the very first show of the Aykroyd/Curtin pairing. The Update set still had a desk with a phone on it, but the background changed from a pale wall to an updated blue wall. Curtin and Aykroyd both wore “WU” patches on their blazers, and announcer Don Pardo announced “Weekend Update and the Weekend Update news team.” Even the correspondents for that first show, Newman, Morris, and Murray, wore the patches. Newman was in her usual role as a correspondent, but there were formalized roles for Murray (film critic) and Morris (sports desk). Even John Belushi had a correspondent’s report from Mexico. There was also a weather report graphic that

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declared that the temperature would be 451 degrees with firestorms on Wednesday.

The only cast member who did not appear on the first “Weekend Update” of the third season was Radner. Aykroyd and Curtin did five stories apiece. It was a revamping departure from the first two seasons of “Weekend Update”.^{xxxix}

“Jane, you ignorant slut” was not uttered on the show until the 15th show of the season, broadcast in March. That was when Aykroyd and Curtin did the first “Point/Counterpoint” on the show. In fact, Aykroyd introduced the segment to determine whether or not, “a Point/Counterpoint segment has *any* point.”^{xxxix} It was a direct response to CBS’ *60 Minutes* segment of the same name. Jane would get her shots in on Aykroyd first, playing the role of Shana Alexander, the first female staff writer and columnist for *Life* magazine and a liberal commentator. Aykroyd fit the conservative James J. Kilpatrick role, and would lead off his argument with “Jane, you ignorant slut.” Stephen Tropiano described the dynamic: “Aykroyd always started with the same line, to which Curtin has no reaction at all. For the record, Curtin managed to get some good potshots in also, calling Dan a ‘reactionary ass,’ ‘self-important swine ass,’ and a ‘miserable failure.’ But Aykroyd calling Curtin an ‘ignorant slut’ is what America wanted and waited to hear.”^{xxxix}

Aykroyd would go on to be the “Weekend Update station manager” for the 1978-1979 season, his final on *Saturday Night Live*. Overall, Aykroyd, an impressionist and character actor, was much different than Chase as far as portraying a male journalist on “Weekend Update”. He had chemistry with Curtin that allowed the two to work in harmony – Chase would upstage Curtin. His best known line from his time on “Weekend

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Update” belies this chemistry, however, as he refers to Curtin as an “ignorant slut”, while Curtin reflects the faux conflict. It is a well-played, and negative, image of the journalism team in the late 1970s.

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BILL MURRAY (w/JANE CURTIN)

The team of Bill Murray and Jane Curtin would represent the most stable period of “Weekend Update” during the first five seasons on *Saturday Night Live*, as the pair would do 40 shows together. That record of stability at the anchor desk would not be broken until Dennis Miller held the anchor position for six seasons (1985 until 1991), and a tandem would not break the 40-episode mark until Jimmy Fallon and Tina Fey at the turn of the century.

Murray, unlike Curtin and Aykroyd, would make several appearances on “Weekend Update” prior to becoming an anchor, and he would also establish a role for himself during that time, as he would appear on Aykroyd and Curtin’s “Weekend Update” eleven out of twenty times to do film commentary.

While Murray adopted Aykroyd’s chemistry with Curtin, he retained a lot of his “stargazing” persona while doing the news, drawing a stronger distinction from Curtin’s “straitlaced” delivery. This was established in his first episode as anchor, in which Curtin announced Murray as Aykroyd’s replacement (saying that she hopes Aykroyd “does a better job as Station Manager than he did as newscaster”). Murray was over-the-top with his enthusiasm for the role: “Hello, you maniacs! Well, they've got me doing the *hard* news this year, and I LOVE it! It's incredible! I've been reading up on things that have been going on, and I'll tell you something: it's opened up a whole new world to me! It's fascinating stuff.”^{xxxiv}

Curtin then tried to engage Murray in a “Point/Counterpoint” segment about the extension of the Equal Rights Amendment, but while Curtin brought the same fury to

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this debate as she would with any with Aykroyd (calling Murray “a pig” at one point), Murray thoughtfully agreed with Curtin, which took Curtin by surprise. For the remainder of the season, Aykroyd would make six appearances to debate with Curtin in Point/Counterpoint.

Murray’s time as anchor seemed to normalize “Weekend Update”, as the “news team” element from the 1977-1978 season was toned down. Murray didn’t laugh at his own jokes or make it seem like he was just passing time, but it was clear that he had a spark whenever he could go back to doing his “stargazing” reports, especially around Oscar season. In a way, he captured the thin dimensions that encapsulate the journalist, the entertainer, and the television personality. He was the “Weekend Update” anchor who was formally known exclusively as the “film reviewer”, bringing energy to the audience the entire time. Murray didn’t necessarily present a “negative” image of the journalist, but his role seemed to be more significant than that of a “neutral” subject.

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CORRESPONDENTS

Throughout *Saturday Night Live's* history, the guests, or correspondents, to "Weekend Update" have served as a means to break up the segment, put the anchor in a facilitating role, and feature other cast members and/or writers on the show in roles that fit better in a faux newscast than in a one-off sketch elsewhere in the program.

As discussed earlier, Curtin, Aykroyd, and Murray all served as correspondents prior to establishing a permanent fixture on "Weekend Update" as anchors. The role of these anchors as correspondents varied greatly: Curtin was little more than a foil to Chase in her few Season 1 appearances; Aykroyd was more likely to provide a voiceover than appear on the desk; and Murray played a variety of editorial roles in Season 2 before settling in with his "Stargazer" role in Season 3.

The first correspondent to be established was Laraine Newman, who made 40 appearances in five seasons, mostly serving as a reporter in the field. Her first assignment was on the series debut in 1975, as Chase checked in on her from Manhattan's Blaine Hotel. The joke would be that while Newman reported murders from the Blaine Hotel, *Saturday Night Live* would then announce that guests of the show stay at the "fabulous" Blaine Hotel.^{xxxv} Newman would also be habitually irresponsible in her assignments, as Tropiano observed: "Newman also had a tendency to arrive early to a place where a major news event was scheduled to happen, like Times Square on December 20 instead of New Year's Eve, or had already taken place, like the New Hampshire Primary. Sometimes it was just the wrong place altogether, like Nassau in the Bahamas instead of NASA."^{xxxvi} Given that a major part of an effective journalist's

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role was reliability, Newman abused that trust often – yet she made more appearances than any non-anchor cast member during those first five seasons except for Gilda Radner. It's almost as if she upholds Powers' thoughts on the role of field reporters.

Radner made 47 appearances on "Weekend Update", and the majority of them were based on two characters she created: Emily Litella (21 appearances) and Roseanne Roseannadanna (16 appearances). Emily Litella was always a fixture on Chase's update, and when Chase came back to host *Saturday Night Live* in Season 3, Emily Litella made her final appearance on a "Weekend Update" anchored by Curtin and Chase (who had bargained a way to get Aykroyd to attend to other business instead of fulfilling his role as anchor). Curtin went on a tirade against Emily Litella and Chase: "You come back, you give Danny (Aykroyd) some story about his mother dying, try to pull the same thing on me, just to take over so you can satisfy your inflated ego! Well, go back to Hollywood and do it, 'cause it WON'T work here! This is MY show, and I WON'T be pushed around by (John) Belushi, or YOU, or HER!! Am I making myself clear?" Chase and Emily Litella both understood, before calling Curtin a "bitch" together.^{xxxvii} An ABC Eyewitness News reporter named Rose Ann Scamardella, according to writer Alan Zweibel, influenced Roseanne Roseannadanna, established as a Consumer Reports correspondent in Season 3.^{xxxviii} Roseanne Roseannadanna would be known for going off on tangents while she responded to letters on "Weekend Update", eventually grossing Jane Curtin out. When Curtin would approach her about how off-topic she was, Roseanne Roseannadanna would always quip, "It's always something."^{xxxix} While Roseanne Roseannadanna was not like Scamardella, Radner

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would say that Roseanne Roseannadanna was meant to counteract “all these women reporting the news on TV; they always look like they’re so frightened to lose their job. You know they’re saying, ‘We’re women and have credibility to report the news, we don’t go number two, we don’t fart’ ... And Roseanne, she’s a pig.”^{xl}

Other cast members and writers have their moments as correspondents. Garrett Morris, the only African-American cast member on the show in the 1970s, would play the role of the headmaster for the hard of hearing, and would complement Chase at the end of “Weekend Update” by shouting out the top story of the night. Morris later established a character, Chico Escuela, who was a washed-up baseball player-turned sports correspondent. He spoke little English, yet still served as a television broadcaster, with his catchphrase being, “baseball, been very very good to me!” John Belushi would make only 19 “Weekend Update” appearances in his four seasons on the show, ten of which served as an opportunity for him to rant about something before spinning out of control (and off the stage).

Perhaps the most memorable of all of the correspondents on “Weekend Update” was Don Novello’s Father Guido Sarducci, who would make 14 appearances in Seasons 4 and 5. Sarducci was a gossip columnist for the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, and he would essentially serve as the “Weekend Update” answer to tabloid journalism. In Season 5, “Weekend Update” had Father Guido Sarducci interview Paul McCartney in London during McCartney’s marijuana scandal. Like Laraine Newman, Father Guido Sarducci would not prove to be a reliable field reporter: “Father Guido had supposedly flown to McCartney’s aid, taking along plenty of

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grass, and was himself arrested just as McCartney was released. His report turned out to be a hilarious plea for help from within a Japanese prison. Later in the season Sarducci filed a live interview with McCartney from London. Forgetting that London was five hours ahead of New York, Sarducci arrived outside McCartney's home to find him still in bed. Father Guido summoned him by throwing pebbles at his window and singing a medley of Beatles songs through a bullhorn."^{xi}

Perhaps the most biting correspondent in the first five seasons of *Saturday Night Live* came from another writer, Al Franken, who made five appearances in Season 5 as the "Social Sciences editor" of "Weekend Update". Franken had established the 1980s as the "Me Decade", but he used the May 10 episode to attack embattled NBC President Fred Silverman. Franken, complaining about having to use a cab instead of being provided a limousine like Silverman, went on to call Silverman "a total, unequivocal failure" while calling Silverman "a lame-o" for the fact that NBC didn't have a top-ten show in the 1979-1980 season.^{xii} Two weeks later, the entire cast and crew left, and Franken's slim chance to become a producer for the show were squashed.^{xiii} The fact that Franken used the "Weekend Update" desk to provide his commentary showed the power that the platform could hold – though it continued to serve as a mostly "negative" image of the journalist.

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CONCLUSION

In 2011, Amarnath Amarasingam discussed the topic of “Fake News” as it relate to its impact in reality. His essay focused on two descendants of “Weekend Update”, Jon Stewart’s *The Daily Show* and Stephen Colbert’s *The Colbert Report*, both on Comedy Central. In Samuel P. Wallace’s review, he asks if “Stewart and Colbert are actually as deep and strategic in their humor and intentions ... or are we just attributing that quality to them?”^{xliv}

There are four different ways to break down the first five seasons of *Saturday Night Live*’s “Weekend Update”. The first is to look at the personnel serving as anchors. While Chase, Curtin, Aykroyd, and Murray all had their distinct styles, none of them were particularly original. They were all based on 1970s journalists who, to some extent, left themselves open to satire.

The second breakdown comes from the content of the jokes themselves. The most vivid example of the selective interests perhaps was Chase’s takedown of Ford on his last show. “Weekend Update” was plug-and-play for the most part; Season 2 host and consumer advocate Ralph Nader said that, “In general, on the weekly news “Update” they bat about .275. More than one of four is really good.”^{xlv}

The third breakdown comes from the correspondents. Some, like Franken, have used the “Update” desk for their own personal conflicts. None actually provided a service of information, as the most serious commentaries would devolve into a shtick like Chase’s funny faces.

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Finally, the fourth breakdown comes from the very set-up of “Weekend Update”.

While the content of the show was not hidden –it is, after all, a comedy show – its effective came through in how the show emulated the atmosphere and setting of television news in the 1970s. Ron Powers’ criticisms of television news and the *Eyewitness/Eyewitless News* format were all touched on at some point by “Weekend Update”. The stories/jokes were quick and simple, accompanied by graphics (often doctored), and there was a high sense of “team” and “action”, especially in Season 3. While this would make for a highly panned television news broadcast, it does make for effective comedy and satire.

While the view of comedy in news is ultimately a negative image of the journalist in popular culture, it does seem to serve some purpose in our media and information consumer culture. As Nader added, “There’ve been a lot of stupid and gross things on *Saturday Night Live*, but it does get across some current events with its skits and its ‘Weekend Update.’ That is just a reflection of the decay of our culture. When the culture decays and the communications media decay, then something as weak as a .275 hitter on *Saturday Night Live* shines.”^{xlvi}

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APPENDIX (number in parenthesis = number of stories)

1975-1976, Season 1 (24 episodes)

- George Carlin/Billy Preston, Janis Ian: Chase (6), Newman (Blaine Hotel)
- Paul Simon/Randy Newman, Phoebe Snow: Chase (5), Simon/Albert/Hawkins
- Rob Reiner: Chase (8), Newman (Blaine Hotel), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)
- Candice Bergen/Esther Phillips: Chase* (9), Curtin (Editorial Reply), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)
- Robert Klein/ABBA, Loudon Wainwright III: Chase (14), D. Aykroyd (Frank Telinka, Editorial Reply), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)
- Lily Tomlin: Chase (10), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)
- Richard Pryor/Gil Scott-Heron: Chase (16), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)
- Candice Bergen/Martha Reeves, The Stylistics: Chase (12) (David Hayward, Artist's Rendition), Newman (Times Square), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)
- Elliott Gould/Anne Murray: Chase (10), Newman (Cape Canaveral), O'Donoghue
- Buck Henry/Bill Withers, Toni Basil: Chase (13), Morris (Angola janitor), Buck Henry (Henry Zuckerman, Editorial Reply), Alan Zweibel (News for the Dead)
- Peter Cook, Dudley Moore/Neil Sedaka: Chase (14), Curtin (Angola), Newman/Morris (Abortion/Times Square), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply), Alan Zweibel (News for the Wet)
- Dick Cavett/Jimmy Cliff: Chase (11) (Peter Ara/Artist's Rendition), Newman/D. Aykroyd (Angola), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply), Tom Schiller (News for "I Love Lucy" Fans)
- Peter Boyle/Al Jarreau: Chase (9) (Rhonda Coulet/Artist's Rendition), Morris (Winter Olympics), Newman (Blaine Hotel), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply)
- Desi Arnaz: Chase (14) (Horst Bucall/Artist's Rendition)

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-Jill Clayburgh/Leon Redbone, The Singing Idlers: Chase (14) (Harland Collins/Artist's Rendition), Newman (New Hampshire Primary), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply)

-Anthony Perkins/Betty Carter: Chase (15) (David Felsen, Artist's Rendition), Belushi (Seasonal Report), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Ron Nessen/Patti Smith Group: Chase (15), Gerald Ford, Newman/Ron Nessen (Mr. Boyardee), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply)

-Raquel Welch/Phoebe Snow, John Sebastian: Chase (13), Newman (Election 1976 Analysis), Radner/Morris (Baba Wawa interview), Belushi (songs about weather)

-Madeline Kahn/Carly Simon: Chase (12), Radner (Emily Litella, Editorial Reply)

-Dyan Cannon/Leon & Mary Russell: Chase (14), Newman/Morris (interview with Howard Hughes Last Will acquirer), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)

-Buck Henry/Gordon Lightfoot: Chase (20) (Duncan Ebersol)

-Elliott Gould/Leon Redbone, Harlan Collins & Joyce Everson: Chase (15) (Jacqueline Carlin), Curtin (Audrey Peart Dickman, Editorial Reply), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Louise Lasser/Preservation Hall Jazz Band: Chase (14) (Leon James), Belushi/Radner (Interview with Olga Korbut)

-Kris Kristofferson/Rita Coolidge: Chase (14), Newman (NASA/Nassau)

1976-1977, Season 2 (23 episodes)

-Lily Tomlin/James Taylor: Chase (13), Newman/Belushi (Blaine Hotel, Paul Rutherford), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Norman Lear/Boz Scaggs: Curtin (10), Newman (Times Square)

-Eric Idle/Joe Cocker, Stuff: Curtin (11), Morris (Art Museum), Belushi (Tonight Show footage)

-Karen Black/John Prine: Chase (15)

-Steve Martin/Kinky Friedman: Chase (12), Curtin (Correspondent), Al Franken

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-Buck Henry/The Band: Chase (13), D. Aykroyd (Carter voiceover), Curtin (People in the News)

-Dick Cavett/Ry Cooder: Curtin (12), Newman (Smokey the Bear Funeral)

-Paul Simon/George Harrison: Curtin (13), Newman (Long Island), Morris (Science Doctor)

-Jodie Foster/Brian Wilson: Curtin (15), D. Aykroyd (voice of Jimmy Carter)

-Candice Bergen/Frank Zappa: Curtin (10), Tom Schiller, D. Aykroyd (Ray Basalt), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Ralph Nader/George Benson: Curtin (10), Belushi (voice, injured), Bill Murray (Rosalynn Carter), Newman/Ralph Nader (Mr. Rigg), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Ruth Gordon/Chuck Berry: Curtin (7), Newman/Ruth Gordon (Lillian Carter), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Fran Tarkenton/Leo Sayer, Donny Harper & The Voices of Tomorrow: Curtin* (10)

-Mardi Gras: Curtin (4), Buck Henry (4), Morris/Moon Landrieu, Newman/Belushi (French Quarter), Radner/Murray (Emily Litella and Captain Devero Boyee)

-Steve Martin/The Kinks: Curtin (11), Newman/D. Aykroyd (Interview with Robert Lazette)

-Sissy Spacek/Richard Baskin: Curtin (8), Newman/Morris (interview with Muhammad Ali), Radner (Emily Litella, Commentary)

-Broderick Crawford/The Meters, Dr. John, Levon Helm, Paul Butterfield: Curtin (8), Morris (Black Governors Ball), Belushi (Irish luck)

-Jack Burns/Santana: Curtin (12)

-Julian Bond/Tom Waits, Brick: Curtin (10)

-Elliott Gould/The McGarrigle Sisters, Roslyn Kind: Curtin (7), Murray (Commentary) (2), Newman/Radner (Howdy Doody funeral, Debbie Doody), Belushi (Shut-Ins)

-Eric Idle/Alan Price, Neil Innes: Curtin (7), Murray (Editorial), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Shelley Duvall/Joan Armatrading: Curtin (11), Radner (voice of Emily Litella)

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-Buck Henry/Jennifer Warnes, Kenny Vance: Curtin (6), Chevy Chase (voice of jockey), Radner/Bella Abzug (Emily Litella with Abzug), Buck Henry (takes away journalism award)

1977-1978, Season 3 (20 episodes)

-Steve Martin/Jackson Browne: D. Aykroyd (5), Curtin (5), Newman (Rosh Hashanah in China report), Murray (Film Review), Morris (Sports Report), Belushi (Report from Durango)

-Madeline Kahn/Taj Mahal: D. Aykroyd (8), Curtin (7), Murray (Weekend Update Review)

-Hugh Hefner/Libby Titus: D. Aykroyd (5), Curtin (5), Tom Schiller (tour), Radner (Nadia Comeneci)

-Charles Grodin/Paul Simon, The Persuasions: D. Aykroyd (4) (Silent Movie News), Curtin (5), Murray (Review), Morris (Lieutenant Jackson)

-Ray Charles: D. Aykroyd (5), Curtin (4), Murray (Review)

-Buck Henry/Leon Redbone: D. Aykroyd (2), Curtin (5), Newman (Anyone Can Host Finalists), Radner (Baba Wawa)

-Mary Kay Place/Willie Nelson: D. Aykroyd (4), Curtin (4), Morris, Newman (Lie Detector), Murray (Eric Sevareid)

-Miskel Spillman/Elvis Costello: D. Aykroyd (3) (voice of Jimmy Carter), Curtin (3), Morris (Point of View), Murray (Review), Radner (Emily Litella)

-Steve Martin/The Dirt Band, Randy Newman: D. Aykroyd (6), Curtin (4), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Robert Klein/Bonnie Raitt: D. Aykroyd (5), Curtin (4), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Chevy Chase/Billy Joel: D. Aykroyd (3), Curtin (4), Chevy Chase (5), Newman/Al Franken (interview with Ray Floyd), Belushi (Correspondent), Radner (Emily Litella), Morris (News for the Hard of Hearing)

-O.J. Simpson/Ashford & Simpson: D. Aykroyd (5), Curtin (4), Murray (Academy Awards report), Newman/O.J. Simpson (interview in locker room), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

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- Art Garfunkel/Stephen Bishop: D. Aykroyd (4), Curtin (6), Morris (science editor), Murray (Film review)
- Jill Clayburgh/Eddie Money: D. Aykroyd (4), Curtin (6), Newman/Al Franken (interview with Lester Crackfield), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)
- Christopher Lee/Meat Loaf: D. Aykroyd (2) (Point-Counterpoint)*, Curtin (7), Belushi (Kevin Scott), Murray (Movie News)
- Michael Palin/Eugene Record: D. Aykroyd (3), Curtin (4), Akira Yoshimura (Lee Kim), Belushi (Editorial)
- Michael Sarrazin/Keith Jarrett, Gravity: D. Aykroyd (2), Curtin (3) (Point-Counterpoint), Murray/Newman (Review), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)
- Steve Martin/The Blues Brothers: D. Aykroyd (5) (Point-Counterpoint), Curtin (4), Morris (marijuana)
- Richard Dreyfuss/Jimmy Buffett, Gary Tigrerman: D. Aykroyd (2), Curtin (2), Murray (Review), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)
- Buck Henry/Sun Ra: D. Aykroyd (4) (Point-Counterpoint), Curtin (4), Newman (court report), Murray (Movie Review)

1978-1979, Season 4 (20 episodes)

- The Rolling Stones: Curtin (2), Murray (5) (Point-Counterpoint), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)
- Fred Willard/Devo: Curtin (6), Murray (2), Radner/Alan Zweibel (Lucille Ball and Gary Morton in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), D. Aykroyd (Strictly Speaking)
- Frank Zappa: Curtin (3), Murray (3), Newman/Brian Doyle-Murray (Anne Beverly and Sid Vicious in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), Don Novello* (Father Guido Sarducci), D. Aykroyd (Point-Counterpoint)
- Steve Martin/Van Morrison: Curtin (4) (Illiteracy Commentary), Murray (2), Morris (Diana Ross in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), Belushi (Election Day Commentary)
- Buck Henry/The Grateful Dead: Curtin (5), Murray (3), Belushi (Elizabeth Taylor in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), D. Aykroyd (Point-Counterpoint)

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-Carrie Fisher/The Blues Brothers: Curtin (4), Murray (4), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Walter Matthau: Curtin (4), Murray (3), Newman (San Francisco), Belushi (Commentary)

-Eric Idle/Kate Bush: Curtin (5), Murray (4), Radner (Valerie Harper in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), Morris (Chico Escuela), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Elliott Gould/Peter Tosh: Curtin (4), Murray (4), Newman/Belushi (interview with Steve Rubell), D. Aykroyd (Point-Counterpoint), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Michael Palin/The Doobie Brothers: Curtin (3), Murray (2), Belushi/Radner (Woody Hayes and Charleen Hayes in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), Morris (Chico Escuela), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Cecily Tyson/Talking Heads: Curtin (7), Murray (5), D. Aykroyd (Strictly Speaking)

-Rick Nelson/Judy Collins: Curtin (5), Murray (4), Morris (Chico Escuela), D. Aykroyd (Point-Counterpoint)

-Kate Jackson/Delbert McClinton: Curtin (5), Murray (5), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Gary Busey/Eubie Blake, Gregory Hines: Curtin (8), Murray (6), Radner (voice of Mrs. Ed in Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner)

-Margot Kidder/The Chieftans: Curtin (4), Murray (3), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci), D. Aykroyd (Point-Counterpoint)

-Richard Benjamin/Rickie Lee Jones: Curtin (5), Murray (3) (Oscar Predictions), Morris (Chico Escuela with Nelson Briles, Steve Henderson, Ed Kranepool), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Milton Berle/Ornette Coleman and Prime Time: Curtin (4), Murray (3), Morris (Chico Escuela with Graig Nettles), Newman (Z. Jones)

-Michael Palin/James Taylor: Curtin (3), Murray (2), Morris (Chico Escuela), Michael Palin (Margaret Thatcher), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Maureen Stapleton/Linda Ronstadt & Phoebe Snow: Curtin (4), Murray (3), D. Aykroyd (Point-Counterpoint), Belushi (Science Editor)

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-Buck Henry/Bette Midler: Curtin (3), Murray (4), Morris (Commentary), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

1979-1980, Season 5 (20 episodes)

-Steve Martin/Blondie: Curtin (5), Murray (5), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Eric Idle/Bob Dylan: Curtin (6), Murray (0) (Commentary), Shearer/Paul Shaffer (Gerald Hacker, Danny Kreutzman), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Bill Russell/Chicago: Curtin (5), Murray (6), Newman/Radner/Tom Schiller (interview with Kimba Kao and Cha Dawan)

-Buck Henry/Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers: Curtin (5), Murray (5), Al Franken (Jack Van Arks), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Bea Arthur/The Roches: Curtin (6), Murray (5), Al Franken (cockroaches)

-Howard Hesseman/Randy Newman: Curtin (7), Murray (6), Morris (Chico Escuela), Al Franken (Social Sciences Editor)

-Martin Sheen/David Bowie: Curtin (6), Murray (5) (Movie Preview), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Ted Knight/Desmond Child & Rouge: Curtin (5), Murray (5), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

-Teri Garr/The B-52s: *Curtin (5), Murray (6), Shearer (Vic Ricker), Newman/P. Aykroyd (interview with Scott Gunderson), Franken (Social Sciences Editor)

-Chevy Chase/Marianne Faithfull, Tom Scott: Curtin (9), Murray (4) (Commentary)

-Elliott Gould/Gary Numan: *Curtin (7), Murray (8), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Kirk Douglas/Sam & Dave: Curtin (7), Murray (6), Shearer (Ronald Reagan), Franken (Social Sciences Editor)

-Rodney Dangerfield/The J. Geils Band: Curtin (7), Murray (3), Tony Dow/Jerry Mathers (Bill Murray's Celebrity Corner), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)

-Paul Simon, James Taylor, David Sanborn: Curtin (5), Murray (3), Ralph Nader (Commentary), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

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- Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss/The Grateful Dead: Curtin (5), Murray (4), Shearer (Vic Ricker), Franken (Social Sciences Editor)
- Burt Reynolds/Anne Murray: Curtin (6), Murray (3) (Oscar Predictions), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)
- Strother Martin/The Specials: Curtin (5), Murray (4), Newman/Davis (interview with G. Gordon Liddy), Morris (Chico Escuela)
- Bob Newhart/The Amazing Rhythm Aces, Bruce Cockburn: Curtin (6), Murray (6), Franken* (Social Sciences Editor)
- Steve Martin/Paul & Linda McCartney, 3-D: *Curtin (6), Murray (6), Don Novello (Father Guido Sarducci)
- Buck Henry/Andrew Gold, Andrae Crouch, The Voices of Unity: Curtin (4), Murray (6), Shearer (Jack Perkins), Morris (Chico Escuela), Radner (Roseanne Roseannadanna)

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ⁱ Baym, Geoffrey. "The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism ." *Political Communication*: 259-276.

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