

= Our World (TV series) =

Our World is an American television news series that ran for 26 episodes , from September 25 , 1986 to May 28 , 1987 . The show was anchored by Linda Ellerbee and Ray Gandolf . Each episode of the series examined , through the use of archival film and television footage , one short period in American history . Our World aired on ABC .

Our World grew out of an earlier ABC News special called 45 / 85 , whose producer , Avram Westin , would go on to produce Our World . Each episode was produced on a budget of \$ 350 @, @ 000 , less than half of the budget of a typical hour of prime time programming at the time .

Our World premiered to indifferent critical response but as the series progressed critics became effusive with their praise . Despite being critically well received and profitable for the network , Our World performed poorly in the Nielsen ratings , as its first half @-@ hour was programmed against the extremely popular The Cosby Show . ABC canceled the show after one season . Ellerbee tried to move the series to PBS but was unsuccessful .

= = Production = =

Our World was created by ABC News president Roone Arledge . The show had its genesis in a 1985 ABC News special called 45 / 85 , a three @-@ hour documentary that reviewed post @-@ World War II history with an emphasis on the Cold War . That special was produced by Avram " Av " Westin , who also produced Our World . Anchors Ellerbee and Gandolf co @-@ wrote Our World , which combined archival footage with new interviews with people who participated in or witnessed the events . Initial plans were that each episode would cover one year , but that idea was quickly scrapped ; Ellerbee said , " It 's hard enough to do a month , or even days . "

ABC hired Ellerbee away from NBC to co @-@ anchor the show . The network considered Sander Vanocur , Dick Schaap and James Wooten as possible partners before selecting Gandolf , at the time the sports anchor for ABC 's World News Saturday and World News Sunday .

Set designers modeled the set for Our World after a corner news stand . For each episode , artifacts of the period being profiled , including magazines and political posters , decorated the set and a movie marquee listed the title of a film that was in theatres of the time . In the foreground was placed an Our World newspaper the headlines of which were the program 's title and the name of that program 's producer .

Each episode cost \$ 350 @, @ 000 to produce as compared to the then @-@ typical \$ 800 @, @ 000 cost of an hour of prime time network programming . The low budget combined with a dozen commercial spots sold at \$ 35 @, @ 000 each meant that Our World generated an estimated \$ 4 million in profit for ABC during its original run and summer repeats .

Our World producers selected each episode 's subject time period with the help of consultants from the Smithsonian Institution and Columbia University . The show was limited in its choices by the available footage for the given time period . Ellerbee recalled a viewer @-@ submitted proposal for an episode on the American Civil War , which could not be made because of the non @-@ existence of archive footage from the 1860s and the lack of any living eyewitnesses .

= = Episode list = =

= = Critical and popular response = =

Critical response to Our World was overall very favorable . Reviews of the premiere episode , however , were somewhat tepid , with The New York Times saying " There are worse ways to spend an hour " and calling the show " a pleasant hour " , while pointing to segments such as an interview with " a man , who , 17 years ago , slept in the house next door to a house struck by the Manson gang " , as " not terribly interesting . " The Los Angeles Times was harsher , calling the debut " rather bland " . While praising anchors Ellerbee and Gandolf , calling them " refreshing [and] off

@-@ center , running against the TV mainstream , making words , not whoopee " , the Times ultimately felt that " Our World offers no sense of who we really were in 1969 because , typical of TV , it renders everything equal . "

With subsequent episodes , reviews improved . The Boston Globe , comparing its debut episode (" a gloppy nostalgia trip that presented history the way MTV presents rock , in digestible , unrelated , bland bite @-@ sized bits ") to an episode airing less than five months later , found it " light years ahead in terms of wit , style and historical perspective . It is still easily digestible , but there 's nothing bland about it . " The St. Petersburg Times said of the show , " It educated , but it was not school . It entertained , but it was not mindless . It was quality - television 's noblest service . " The San Diego Union concurred , citing Our World as " the most refreshing , fascinating and innovative history series ever on TV " .

Popular response was much less effusive . The show averaged 9 million viewers per episode , as compared to The Cosby Show , which garnered an average 63 million viewers per week . Our World was the lowest rated prime time show of the 104 that aired during the 1986 @-@ 7 television season , bringing in only a 6 @. @ 5 / 10 rating / share . One segment of the public who responded very favorably to the program was teachers , who assigned Our World as homework . ABC created a study guide for the show , mailing out some 39 @, @ 000 copies a month to educators and fans .

Gandolf , Ellerbee and Richard Gerdau won Emmy Awards for Outstanding Individual Achievement in News and Documentary Programming (writing) for the episode " Halloween 1938 " .

= = Cancellation and PBS = =

ABC canceled Our World after its first season , replacing it with the situation comedies Sledge Hammer ! and The Charmings . Ellerbee and Gandolf learned that the show had been canceled from a segment on Entertainment Tonight . Ellerbee sharply criticized ABC for the cancellation , saying " If they had left it there for three to four years , it could have done what 60 Minutes did , which went against the Disney juggernaut on NBC . It could have developed slowly as an alternative program without being in the ratings race . " The advocacy group Viewers for Quality Television mounted a letter @-@ writing campaign to save the show ? similar to campaigns that had saved Designing Women and Cagney and Lacey ? and generated some 20 @, @ 000 letters of support , but the campaign was unsuccessful .

PBS expressed interest in obtaining the show . Although ABC asserted rights to the name " Our World , " Ellerbee said " We never liked that title to begin with " and stated that the name " Your World " was under consideration . Ellerbee planned to co @-@ produce the show through her production company , Lucky Duck Productions , in partnership with WNET . Ultimately , Ellerbee was unable to secure the estimated \$ 5 million needed to produce the first season of 13 episodes and Our World did not make the transition to PBS .

In 1988 , CBS tried to revive the format of Our World with a television pilot called Try to Remember . Anchored by veteran newscaster Charles Kuralt , Try to Remember covered August 11 ? 17 , 1969 , echoing Our World 's pilot coverage of the summer of 1969 . The show aired on Thursday , June 23 . Try to Remember did not get picked up as a regular series .