

TELEVISION

By GARRY RAFFAELE

## Bug-Eyed Monsters back in force

I REFER you to 'Project UFO' (CTC-7 Saturday, 6.30). There might even be times when you would be tempted to accept it for what it claims to be — a "slightly" fictionalised account of the American Air Force search for the BEMs.

Ah, I have confused you, well some of you anyway. BEMs, you see, are Bug-Eyed Monsters, familiar to us who wiled away the boredom and pimples of adolescence with Ray Bradbury and Kornbluth and Clarke, science fiction freaks.

'Project UFO' rises to none of the heights attained by that trio of writers — I think the series is the try-out area for aspiring Sesame Street scripters. But it's the tantalising "objectivity" that doubles me up with mirth, the refusal of the two earnest young clean-cut Americans (who I think called at my front door this week trying to bring me back to Jesus and the Gospel) to declare as certain the existence of creatures from beyond.

If they are out there I wonder if they eavesdrop on the flaccidity of Parkinson or the guinea-pig movements of Ronnie Corbett. No wonder,

ments of Ronnie Corbett. No wonder,

I say, that they are staying out of sight, waiting no doubt for Armageddon and the destruction of all television sets.

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**NOT** that I dislike television at all. Far from it. The other three nuclei in my particular familial grouping often bemoan and bewail the time I spend, slouched in the bean bag, waiting for the next Judy Garland movie or British documentary.

I have even been known to have watched an entire 'Countdown', from opening credits to final fade. I'm afraid though I couldn't handle last week's. Lovely Elton John, now better known as the manager of an out-of-London soccer team, simpered and swanned his way through four or five minutes — and I was forced to take refuge in the lounge room and the record player and the Elton John of yesteryear, when he really was something else, feathers and wide-eyed, tinsel and glitter, outrageous, wonderful; fat behind wiggling and jiggling.

Now he's had the transplant, you know, the hair. And he's really serious, you know, the Frank Sinatra of his generation. I fear for my daughter's taste — she wanted to go to Sydney for the man's concert.

**Then there's dear Molly Meldrum.** Surely Australian rock and roll deserves better than that.

**Me, I retreated to Yellow Brick Road,** wrapping around me the most cloying case of galloping nostalgia you

cloying case of galloping nostalgia you are likely to see this side of the year before last.

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**I FIND** myself drawn to 1990 (ABC, Monday 8.30pm).

But have you tried working out the politics of Jim Kyle (Edward Woodward) and the baddies of the Public Control Department? The closest I can come is that James is one of your Simon-pure, small "I" liberals, fighting the good fight against the bureaucrats and technocrats.

But are the meanies of the Left or the Right? One week they sound like a Tony Benn public service gone mad, the next like a cadre of Sir Keith Joseph acolytes. I think that's called having it both ways. See, if your preferences tend to the left, then you cast the PCD in the rightish mould and vice versa. Sneaky trick, that!

Well, that's the theory anyway. Somehow I can't help feeling it's a cop-out — and, if you must know, I see the sons of bitches somewhere to the right of Genghis Khan.

At least it gives you the chance to build in your own fantasy. Mine sees the National Front filling some sort of power vacuum with their own brand of nastiness and Jim Kyle is me, liberal individualistic, crusading journalist, facing out the totalitarians, beating them at their own game, sip-

ping their brandy and riding their cars, but subverting the system in a daring, dazzling game of deception.

daring, dazzling game of deception. Well, that's the image after the third whisky. I'm drawn, I think, because the series has no real intellectual credibility but survives, even prospers because it is crafted so neatly — the acting, writing, direction, photography, all moves toward the one end. Clever, that.

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**TALKING** about nostalgia (which I was even if you weren't), I spent a few days on Norfolk Island a week or two ago. And there was no telly. Just like pre-1956. Very uplifting. Made me actually talk to a few people. But I did miss my 'MASH' my 'Reginald Perrin', my 'I, Claudius' my Sunday Night Movie (well, sometime at least), and my 'Everyman'.

There was a bloke on the island who had bought himself a video recorder/player. Very enthusiastic, he was, for the first few days. Even bought a few cassettes to put in the machine. But then the novelty wore off (must be something to do with the balmy nights and the avocados growing wild just outside the back door) and the tube hasn't lit up since.

Just think what he's missing.